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THE CLUB
AND
THE DRAWING-ROOM.



THE CLUB.
AND
THE DRAWING-ROOM.

BEING
PICTURES OF MODERN LIFE :
SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND PROFESSIONAL.

By CECIL HAY, M.A.

Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille,
Sich ein Charakter in dem Strom der Welt.—GÖTTE: *Tasso*.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.



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PREFACE.

THE title of these volumes is a sufficient index of their purpose—that of depicting modern society under certain of its more characteristic aspects. This purpose it is hoped that they will, with a fair amount of fidelity, fulfil. It may perhaps be as well, in the case of a work whose scope may be possibly misconceived or misrepresented, to state *in limine* that while the author has endeavoured to be reasonably true at all points to his theme, he has also been careful not to exceed the limits of a wholesome and justifiable realism, and that he wishes it distinctly to be understood that he has on every occasion, when it has been necessary to introduce into his work sketches of character, striven to select types, and not persons. The portrayal of the former is one thing, the portrayal of the latter quite another; and it is most important that there should be no confusion between two essentially different processes.

LONDON, *January*, 1870.

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THE CLUB AND THE DRAWING-ROOM.

PART I.—THE CLUB.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

The Club and the Drawing-room, the two modern social poles — Clubs as English in idea as Cricket, and as comparatively novel in their development as they are national — General scheme of this work.

THE Club and the Drawing-room: why treat of them together? it may be asked. To which we reply, that it is impossible to treat of either in a manner which can be satisfactory or exhaustive without also treating of the other. The two are, in fact, correlative terms; they may be regarded as the essential embodiments of two mutually antagonistic influences in modern social life—the two poles towards one or other of which all portions of civilized humanity in this highly artificial nineteenth century existence of ours irresistibly and necessarily gravitate. Taken together, the club and the drawing-room comprehend, as the greater does the less, the

whole of that much-vexed question, bachelordom *versus* matrimony, for the simple reason that they are, at any rate in the popular view, each of them the incarnation and the enthronement of two different theories of living, between which there is waged a perpetual strife, an everlasting war. We can only know things by their opposites; it would be as impossible to gain an idea of the meaning of day without some experience of night, as of the club without the drawing-room, or the drawing-room without the club. In coupling the two we are but acting in deference to the philosophy of the real and to the logic of facts.

The modern club is then, rightly or wrongly, regarded as symbolical of the exaltation of celibacy; the drawing-room as indicative of the sovereignty of wedded life: the one denotes the triumph of the selfish aspirations of luxurious manhood, the other the absorbing sway of womanhood. All roads, it is said, lead to Rome; for us Englishmen all paths of existence are destined to land us either in Pall Mall or Belgravia; it is a question between a drawing-room in Tyburnia and a smoking-room in St. James's. Cases of course there are in which the charms of the one can be and are combined with the blessings of the other. We have not advanced the preposterous misstatement that the palaces which are within a radius of a quarter of a mile from Nelson's Pillar are wholly and solely consecrated to the usages of those who have sworn eternal hostility to the institution of matrimony; we

merely wish to indicate that the primary motive which inspired their creation is apart from that which induces the plunge into connubial and family bliss. For the soundness of our theory we appeal to the experience of our readers.

If the English drawing-room differs essentially from the continental *salon*, the English club is not less native to the soil. Our lively neighbour the Gaul has endeavoured to acclimatize cricket, the effect is a practical failure; and the same thing may be said of his attempted reproduction of our great national phenomenon of club life. The club is essentially a type of an Englishman's constitution—at once gregarious and isolated; and combines in itself all the opportunities he can desire for sociality and for solitude. Quit the West End of London and the thing is not to be found. Nowhere but in this mighty capital will you meet with men whose being, whose interests, and whose opinions are summed up in one word—the Club. It is not too much to say that if the club once fairly sets its seal upon the brow of such an one, the mark is seldom obliterated, the influence never shaken off. Clergymen are wedded to their church; there are London bachelors who are wedded to their clubs, who judge the whole external world by the standard which prevails within those sacred walls, who live and move there, who transact their business there, who have no other address, who know of no other place where the physical needs of nature can be satisfied, and to whom

the club library and the club reading-room contain the whole sum of knowledge, human and divine. Search France, Italy, Germany, Spain, and you will fail to meet with a tribe at all like that which only quits its chambers in the streets of St. James's or those branching out of it to take its leisure in the clubs contiguous to the same. It will be our business later in this treatise to present the reader with an accurate description and vivid portraiture of specimens of this genus, and of the social establishments to which they resort. We shall make the acquaintance of the man who has many clubs, and of the man whose whole affections are centred only in one; of the man who frequents his club because his domestic arrangements are *nil*, and of the man who goes thither because these same arrangements do not dovetail with his tastes; of the man to whom the club is a pleasure and a relaxation; and of the man to whom it is a business. The club men of London are an only partially recorded race; they well deserve to be investigated.

But if it may be considered remarkable that club life is a feature peculiar to England, the comparative novelty of its development is not less remarkable. Clubs have sprung up with the rapidity of mushroom growth. The reunions which took place between the wits of the eighteenth century would be celebrated elsewhere now—could we revivify those worthies—than at Dick's or Peele's. As many as are modern professions, so many are our clubs. Thus, as we have statesmen and divines, warriors who

fight with the sword and authors who fight with the pen, advocates and civil servants, doctors and men of science, artists and poets, merchants and traders, so have we springing up every day in our midst clubs primarily instituted for the advancement of the several interests of these miscellaneous callings. The morning-room at the club is the common and neutral ground on which they can all meet. We shall have the satisfaction of scrutinizing the practical operation and effects of institutions such as these : we shall notice, if you please, with eye “serene the very pulse of the machine :” in a word, we shall study club life in all its phases. Club life can be known only by a careful and clear observation of club men.

To turn from these institutions, which may justly be regarded as one of the weightiest topics of our modern life,—institutions whose operation has before now ruined a cabinet or brought on a dissolution,—it will be found that the varieties of the drawing-room are scarcely less numerous. If there is a conservative and a revolutionary spirit at work in modern politics, there is not less so in modern drawing-rooms. Such are our theories : we will cease to be abstract, and turn to the concrete.

CHAPTER II.

THE RISE OF CLUB LIFE HISTORICALLY TRACED.

The idea of Club Life implanted in man by nature, and in some shape or other conspicuous at all ages — The Club of the Patriarchal period. — Greece the parent of European civilization in general, and the genuine original source of the Club scheme in particular — Club Life in ancient Athens — Political Club Life of the Periclean age — Alcibiades at the Club — *οι συνανθρανοόμενοι* — Club Life at Rome — Secret Societies — The rise of Club Life in England — *La Court de bone Compagnie* — The 'Mermaid,' the 'Rota' — Fundamental differences between old and modern Clubs — Decline of conversation and its cause — Clubs and gambling, old and new — The Coffee-house the true progenitor of the Club — The process of the development and metamorphosis, and their significance.

CLUB life we have asserted to be a peculiarly English phenomenon, and so in the shape in which it exists amongst us at the present day—a life in palaces, with set rules and ceremonials of its own—it indeed is; but as for clubs,—clubs in the abstract, ideal clubs,—why we have had them in some shape or another at all ages and amongst all nations. "Man, being reasonable," says Byron, "must——" But why conclude this apotheosis of inebriety? It is true, however, that man, being sociable, must have clubs. The germ of club life is to be found in the unalterable and ineradicable roots of human nature, just as the original source of the rarest exotic

that ever bloomed in a conservatory is in reality—though the breed has doubtless been crossed a thousand times—the lineal descendant of the herbs which bloomed in the full wildness of their native luxuriance upon the immemorial hills. Nature gave the hint—men adopted it. It was, we believe, the remark of King Alphonso X., “that if he had been present at the creation he could have suggested several improvements.” The outlines of the club scheme formed part and parcel of our original humanity; the degree of artificial elaborateness to which it has been wrought up is merely an improvement suggested by mankind to nature. To prove the continuity of the design, let us have recourse to etymology.

A club may be defined as a voluntary association formed for a purpose. It matters not to us whether the definition of the word is to be found in the Anglo-Saxon *cleofian* (cleave),—because, we suppose, the earliest notion of a club dinner was that the bill had to be cleaved or split amongst the guests present,—or in the Celtic *khuppa*, or the Dutch *Kluppel*, both of which sufficiently unpronounceable terms indicate a knotty stick, and point to a cluster of men bound together by certain rules; or whether we assume the substantive to be but another form of *Gelübde*, whose etymology is the German *lieben*, and thus import the idea of love into the derivation of the term.* There were clubs when the Celts had not yet

* The Archbishop of Dublin (cf. Trench on ‘The Study of Words,’ p. 88) is of opinion that *club* is primarily an English word. “It is

deserted their native fastnesses—we hope Mr. Matthew Arnold will forgive us the remark—and while the Anglo-Saxon element was as yet in the womb of the future. Clubs—do we not know that in the patriarchal age there were factions? Do we not further know that the members of these factions were wont to meet together to dine, to drink, and to talk over their own party measures? What else have we here than a club in embryo? It matters not to us whether their feasting and conversation were carried on beneath the shadow of tents or beneath the umbrageous leafage of the fig-trees of the period. If these ancients were to come to life now we might be able to give them some little instruction as to the accessories of enjoyment: we could teach them little that was new as to the essential idea. Human nature has not changed; its external appearance may be modified; it may clothe itself in raiments more gorgeous, and may inhabit houses more magnificent than of yore, but after all it remains in its more vital elements the same now that it always was. Truly, indeed, does the great Verulam tell us that we make a mistake when we speak of the men of past ages as of the ancients of the world. They were the children; it is we who are the true ancients, and not they.

It is our object, however, to be briefly historical, rather

singularly characteristic of the social and political life of England, as distinguished from that of the other European nations, that to it alone the word club belongs; the French and German languages having been alike unable to grow a word of their own as its equivalent, being obliged both to borrow from us its designation."

than vaguely speculative. We must take it as distinctly proved by the intrusive evidence which the book of nature contains, rather than attempt to prove it at any length ourselves, that the club has in all ages existed as an institution in some form. The records are, indeed, lost to us. There were no lists of names published in those days; secretaries were scarcely up to their work; defaulters were let off too easily, and the proceedings of the club auditors were probably somewhat informal in their character. Let us shift the scene from the contingent to the certain, from the possible to the known.

In what quarter, then, of the habitable globe did the first well-ascertained historical club spring into birth? Where should it but in that land to which we owe all our modern civilization—Greece? That social life of old Hellas! Why does there not exist amongst us a greater popular knowledge of it? For ourselves, we feel jealous when we reflect upon the manner in which the whole tide of modern favour sets towards the land of the Latin. Far be it from us to plebify Athens as Rome has been plebified. Go to the Corso—it is your tailor who is your next-door neighbour; ride round the Pincian—you meet in every third carriage with faces as familiar to you as those to be encountered in Hyde Park towards the fag-end of the season. Heaven forbid that the Acropolis should ever become assimilated in its features to Constitution Hill. But Athens was a noble city when Rome was morass; the home of polished gentlemen, the haunt

of scholars, wits, philosophers, and, we fear we must add, sad rakes, long before the seven-hilled city had obtruded itself into public notice by dint of the efforts of brigands, braggadocios, and boors. So much for antiquity; and as for its influence upon the subsequent tenor of European civilization, what has Rome to show to Athens? Who drove back the Persian, and what did this repulse of Xerxes really mean? Simply this: the fate of the world was decided on the plains of Marathon. Had the Asiatic despot been victorious only that once, the whole current of subsequent history would have been diverted from its course. There would have been no barrier to oppose to the influx of Oriental ideas, and of Oriental arms; and at the present day we should be living under the influence of Asiatic instead of European thought. As it is, Athens is the real clock from which we, in common with our neighbours on the Continent, have taken our time. As it might have been, it would have been Susa or Sardis. All that is best in our notions of art, elegance, and refined comfort, is eminently Greek. The modern club is supposed to be an embodiment and collection of each of these charming qualities—the spacious vestibule, with its Doric decorations; the ample staircase, with its attendant nymphs, hewn of marble and tenacious of candelabra; the device of the railings; the long colonnades; the very atmosphere replete with luxury; the musical footfall of the attendants—should we have had any of these were it not for that jagged little

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peninsula which, beneath an atmosphere clearer than the purest Amontillado, abuts with its marble cliffs upon the divine blue of the Mediterranean? There could have been none of our clubs were it not for the soul-subduing might of Greek influence: there could have been no Greek influence felt were it not for the victory at Marathon: therefore—a strictly logical conclusion—it is to that immortal triumph that the foundation of the modern club must be ascribed.

To descend to particulars. There were clubs at Athens, as we have said—clubs pure and simple, closely approximating to the modern institution in every respect save that of the edifice. There were clubs, but there were not club-houses: there was the spirit of the establishment, but there was not its expression in material objective masonry. The ordinary Athenian club pretty closely resembled our benefit society. The members used to meet together periodically to dine—each one bringing with him his contribution to the feast—and to discuss the affairs of the society. The plates were cleared away, and the Samian wine was duly served. The club books were opened. So-and-So, it was remarked, was in difficulties, and had applied for a friendly subsidy. A motion to this effect was put to the vote. Possibly it was opposed by So-and-So's enemies. He had been extravagant; had done nothing for the club, and had no right to expect the club to do anything for him. But our hero who was suffering from financial embarrassment had his friends.

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Meanwhile, the old Samian was beginning to assert its supremacy with the conclave: objections were borne down: an order for so many drachmæ was signed. One bottle more,—another yet;—it began to be murmured that the president of the feast was verging on the confines of intoxication:—"Eranarches, your wife awaits you." The hint was taken, and these gentlemanly revellers, their feasting and their charity concluded, bundled home beneath the clear sky, studded with its diamond stars. These were not the only questions that would from time to time arise. Subscriptions occasionally would fall in arrear: applications made by the secretary were disregarded by the impecunious members: a committee-meeting was held: should the defaulter's name be struck off the club? the ballot-box was brought forward: and, such was the generosity of the Athenian nature, in the greater number of cases the majority of votes was in favour of the delinquent.

This was the club catholic, or general; but there were clubs established with a special purpose, just as there are in the present year of grace and in this present civilized England of ours—clubs political, commercial, and intellectual. We know, too, upon the unimpeachable authority of no less a writer than Athenæus, that between each of these no small jealousy existed. A member of a commercial club endeavoured to gain access to a political society. Personally he might be popular enough; but the Athenian clubbist took his stand upon a prin-

ciple : once do away with the exclusive character of the club, and you ruin it.

But if we wish to know anything of the political club life of Greece, we must go down to a later period of her history—to the time when the men had lost something of the sturdy simplicity of her early patriotism ; when a taste for more complicated forms of luxury had crept in—to the time when she was the veritable Paris of the ancients ; when her society was brilliantly and highly artificial ; when Pericles, prince of diplomatists and statesmen, had given his countrymen their finishing lesson in civilization ; when government had become a science, and when, as a natural result, there were distinct political parties in the State. Who that knows anything of the history of those unrivalled days can attempt for a moment to deny that the germ of our modern Carlton and Reform was to be found in the political *hetaireiai* of the Attic capital ? They might have been without the social appliances and advantages which their existing antitypes enjoy, simply because these were to be found elsewhere,—in the hospitality of private friends, and in the elegant shades of the Stoa Poikilé or the leafy coolness of the groves of Academus ; but we know for a fact, on the unimpeachable authority of the historian of the Peloponnesian war, to say nothing of the clear demonstration of Mr. Grote, that the Athenian democrats and the Athenian aristocrats—the Reformers and Conservatives of that grand epoch—systematically attempted to

advance their own principles and power through the instrumentality of the club political. Was it not by means of his aristocratic club allies that the prestige of that incompetent but extremely gentlemanlike and conscientious officer Nicias was maintained? Was it not they who systematically deceived and repressed the bumptious and offensive but indisputably clever Cleon? What else is this but a precise parallel to the procedure of club life in our new Babylon? Sporting clubs, too, there were at Athens—societies established for the promotion of the noble purpose of speculation. Shortly before Alcibiades made his noted *coup* at the Olympic games, is it not probable that the issue of the event was greedily anticipated and discussed in these refined circles; that the young gallants, who were the sworn friends of that wayward Athenian genius, backed their opinion heavily; and that whenever he, the hero of the day, entered their circle, his club associates questioned him as to his prospects, closely as ever has been done at Tattersall's, with more effect in the matter of eliciting a reply? At any rate, we are bold to say, Alcibiades at the club would have furnished an admirable theme to the magazine scribbler at the period. There would have been strange doings to recount, curious conversation to report; and the narrative would have been broken by the fact that it suddenly occurred to the young noble, who, though his cheeks may have been flushed with wine, preserved a head cool as the waters of the neighbouring Ilissus,

that he had an appointment to discuss philosophy with Socrates.

Curious and melancholy are the tales which have come down to us of the social habits of a select company of young men of Greece, who, full of the Cyrenaic teachings of the philosopher Aristippus, formed themselves into a band, in order that their lives might be a practical illustration of his precepts. "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die:" that was emphatically their maxim. The title which they chose was significant, "Those about to die together" (*οἱ συναποθανούμενοι*). The pleasure of the moment was the sole joy of existence; and of the goblet of so-called pleasure they deeply drank—what if destruction lurked at the bottom? Was it life the youths wished to see? Nay, these *viveurs*—it was death. Their banquets, their club feasts have well been pictured by a writer who has realized, in a very vivid manner, the scene.

"Over some flasks of the red Chian wine, within the walls of a noble hall, in a dim city we sat, at night, a company of seven. And to our chamber there was no entrance, save by a lofty door of brass; and the door was fashioned by the artisan Corinnos, and, being of rare workmanship, was fastened from within. Black draperies likewise, in the gloomy room, shut out from our view the moon, the lurid stars, and the peopleless streets; but the boding and the memory of evil, they would not be so excluded. There were things around us and about, of

which I can render no distinct account—things material and spiritual—heaviness in the atmosphere, a sense of suffocation, anxiety, and, above all, that terrible state of existence which the nervous experience when the senses are keenly living and awake, and meanwhile the powers of thought lie dormant. A dead weight hung upon us, and all things were depressed and borne down thereby—all things, save only the flames of the seven iron lamps which illumined our revel. Uprearing themselves in tall, slender lines of light, they thus remained burning, all pallid and motionless; and in the mirror which their lustre formed upon the round table of ebony at which we sat, each of us there assembled beheld the pallor of his own countenance, and the unquiet glare in the downcast eyes of his companions. Yet we laughed and were merry in our proper way—which was hysterical; and sang the songs of Anacreon—which are madness; and drank deeply—although the purple wine reminded us of blood. For there was yet another tenant of our chamber, in the person of young Zoilus. Dead, and at full length he lay enshrouded—the genius and the demon of the scene. Alas! he bore no portion in our mirth, save that his countenance, distorted with the plague, and his eyes in which death had but half-extinguished the fire of the pestilence, seemed to take such interest in our merriment as they may haply take in the merriment of those who are to die. But although I, Oinos, felt that the eyes of the departed were upon me, still I forced myself not to

perceive the bitterness of their expression; and, gazing down steadily into the depths of the ebony mirror, sang with a loud and sonorous voice the songs of the son of Teos. But gradually my songs they ceased, and their echoes, rolling afar off among the sable draperies of the chamber, became weak and undistinguishable, and so faded away. And lo! from among those sable draperies, where the sounds of the song departed, there came forth a dark and undefined shadow—a shadow such as the moon, when low in the heaven, might fashion from the figure of a man; but it was the shadow neither of man, nor of God, nor of any familiar thing; and, quivering awhile among the draperies of the room, it at length rested in full view upon the surface of the door of brass. And at length I, Oinos, speaking some low words, demanded of the shadow its dwelling and its appellation. And the shadow answered, ‘I am Shadow, and my dwelling is near to the Catacombs of Ptolemais, and hard by those dim plains which border upon the foul Charonian canal.’”

Such was the club life of a chosen company of whose existence we have *bona fide* historical evidence: an *unique* institution almost, and yet a kind of parallel may be discovered for them in the annals of the society which, in more modern days, has rejoiced in the sulphureous title of the Hell Fire Club. The *συνναποθανούμενοι* were the Hell Fire Club of the classical age.

The club life of ancient Rome must be held to

have possessed far fewer social or distinctly clubbable features than that of Greece. Reunions for the purpose of pleasing recreation were not so much to the genius of a people, which was inspired by notions of duty and work infinitely more rigid than those entertained by the elegant Hellene. Even as time wore on, and the conquest of foreign lands introduced into Rome habits of luxury from which the stern simplicity of the aboriginal Latin, the representative of the *intonsus Cato*, altogether revolted, it may be questioned whether clubs ever gained the same degree of prominence that they undoubtedly acquired in the Greek capital. Clubs there were, it is true, but they were for the main part wholly political—entirely devoted to business purposes—seldom meeting, save when an election for the consulship or other such office had to be organized. In endeavouring to institute a comparison between classical and modern English society, we must never lose sight of the immense difference of feature caused by the one fact of the climate. Beneath the genial and moderately faithful skies of Italy or Greece out-of-door intercourse was a possibility, and a fact which it never could have been with us. We have hinted at the effect that it had upon the club life of Athens; its effect was still greater upon that of Rome: the meetings in the forum, the walks under the shelter of the *basilica*, and above all the *rendezvous* of the baths, afforded the Roman just those opportunities for gossip and society which the club does in England. The

passion for lounging is indeed, and ever has been, inherent in all humanity ; it is only to be expected that it should be more strongly developed in those people who enjoy by nature the most favourable facility for indulging it. The craving for the lounge has been conspicuous in the Italian at all periods of his history : in the old days it was gratified in the manner that we have shown. As for the English, so far as it exists, it finds its enjoyment mainly in the club, physical facts being sufficient to account for the diversity of its development in the two cases. If the British heaven had been less treacherous, less prone, at very short warning, to descend in tears upon the surface of the earth, we venture to say that just as we should have more accommodation for open air lounging, so we should have had a very much smaller number of clubs. This is one of the many ways in which the physical influences to which we are subject may be considered to have moulded our characters and our tastes.

The secret societies of the Middle Ages can scarcely be considered clubs in our sense of the word. The element of sociality was entirely wanting in them, and they were rather, as De Quincey has told us, organizations whose sole aim was the clandestine perpetuity and traditional handing-down through generations of some central idea. It was this notion of mysterious imperishability which gave them their grandeur and their dignity ; the notion that though individual men

might die and pass away, their secret still lived behind them, was passed on from one to another, through the ages, inviolate and undecaying. Such societies as these can present but a faint affinity or analogy to those institutions whose living activity we wish in these volumes to portray: their real antitypes of to-day are to be seen in our masonic lodges. So far as our knowledge goes we may search in vain throughout that interval which exists between the old Roman days and England of the fifteenth or sixteenth century for any association that at all corresponds with our present idea of an average club.

Profound historical research is not the object of this work; for those who wish to gain an accurate antiquarian acquaintance with the origin of clubs, and those aboriginal institutions which enjoyed that name, it is sufficient to mention the elaborate treatises of such searchers after half-forgotten facts and semi-extinct memories as Mr. Timbs. Still we cannot dispense wholly with some reference to the annals of our national club life of the long past. If we wish to realize to the full extent the peculiarity of the phenomenon of our clubs as we have them in this year of grace 1869, we must endeavour to picture to ourselves what has the nearest approach to them some two or three hundred years ago, and in what important particulars each differs from the other. Clubs,—we hear of them or their substitutes as far back as the age of Sir Walter Raleigh, who with a select company of his friends was in the habit of frequenting a certain hostelry

in Friday Street, or Bread Street, Cheapside. Nay, earlier even than that; for does not Occleve, ætat. Henry IV., tell us of a certain institution, by name *La Court de bone Compagnie*, to which he and probably Chaucer belonged? Does he not send a metrical notice to Sub-treasurer Henry Somer, of a certain "house-dinner" to be held, at which he, Somer, is to occupy the chair?

"For the dyner arraye
Ageyn Thirsdai next, and nat is delaye."

Further, to avail ourselves of the intelligence which Mr. Timbs has fished up from the intricate depths of various archives, does not the same poet also intimate that the said *Court de bone Compagnie* has received a letter of remembrance from the above-mentioned Henry Somer, *à propos* of sundry social excesses, of which several of the members had been guilty?

Evidently then we have in this association, whose date may be referred to the fifteenth century, the germs at any rate of the club. But the word was not yet in force. Later again, at the end of the sixteenth or the beginning of the seventeenth century, we are told of that familiar gathering of wits which used regularly to meet at the 'Mermaid' tavern. Then we hear of the members of the Society of Apollo, whose special haunt was a tavern, with the sign of the 'Devil,' between Temple Bar and the Middle Temple Gate. But in none of these cases had the phrase "Club" yet been coined: and it is a curious

fact that the expression was first used in a political connection. The Rota coffee-house is the earliest instance of any approximation to the party organizations whose structures now grace Pall Mall and St. James's Street; and it is the same Rota in which, to quote Aubrey, "the term *clubbe* began to be used for a sodality in a tavern."

And this brings us to one of the main differences between the associations of the present day and those of the times to which we are looking back. The old-fashioned clubs were without exception "sodalities in taverns." They had not yet attained the dignity of claiming for themselves independent edifices as their private property. They were simply "assemblies of good fellows meeting under certain conditions"—assemblies possessed by no idea of the rights or the sweetness of possession of material brick and mortar. But the craving after independent ownership is quite as characteristic of communities as of individuals, and the club man of to-day would feel it but a meagre satisfaction to have use of a limited allowance of rooms, without the privilege of pointing to the furniture and the appurtenances by which he was surrounded, and feeling as he did so a vested interest in them. The building in Pall Mall which is now the office of the Ordnance is the earliest instance of a modern club mansion, and even then it was but a subscription house called the Albion Hotel, and designed for the special enjoyment and edification of H.R.H. Edward Duke of York, brother of George III.

As for the Rota Club, its nearest antitype in these modern times is most likely to be found in some of those compromises between public-houses and debating societies, known by the name of Discussion Halls or Forums, of which a certain establishment yecept "Cogers' Hall," in Shoe Lane, Fleet Street, may be mentioned as a specimen. The essence of a club is, as we have hinted, the equality of those who resort to it. Personal obtrusiveness is resented as ill bred, and boredom is an unpardonable sin against society. Any attempt to monopolize attention or to keep conversation solely to ourself is an offence not to be passed over, and the club orator is an unmitigated nuisance. But all this was reversed at the Rota. The propagation of republican opinions was the fundamental object of this society. Harrington, the author of '*Oceana*,' used to declaim night after night on the blessings of a commonwealth and on the virtues of the ballot. Round the table regularly would there gather Milton, Marvell, Cyriac Skinner, and Nevill, deep in the discussion of abstract questions—discussions which would now and then be interrupted by the uproarious conduct of the disputants. "One time," quotes the laborious Mr. Timbs, from a chronicle whose name he omits to mention, "Mr. Stafford and his friends came in drunk from the tavern and affronted the Junto; the soldiers offered to kick them down stayres, but Mr. Harrington's moderation and persuasion hindered it."

But it is not to be supposed that in those days demo-

cratic principles alone found their expression in clubs. There was a society quite as fervently Royalist as the Rota was vehemently Republican. *The Sealed Knot*, which one year before the second Charles came to claim his father's crown, had organized in his favour a general insurrection. A little later and we hear of the private club haunts of Swift, and other strange stories of the good old school of nights at the *Saturday*, and of long-protracted suppers at the *Brothers*. Whig clubs, too, were there in those days. The Kit Kat, whose local habitation was in a small tavern half-way up a dingy alley near Temple Bar, and other lesser societies. But as for all these, the Mohocks, the Tatler's Club, the Royal Society Club, the rise of Almack's, its subsequent absorption into the existent Brooks's, the illustrious Beef Steak Society, Watier's, and what not else, is not their history written in the book of the indefatigable author of the 'Curiosities of London'?

The distinctions between the clubs of the old time and the clubs of the new might be elucidated at still further length. If the system of giving free play on the occasion of their meetings to the undisputed eloquence of individual members had its disadvantages, which would not have been tolerated with us, if it rendered the chances of boredom much greater than we should be willing to run; still it was directly or indirectly productive of certain features of social brilliance, which have ceased to become conspicuous save by their absence. Mr. Shirley Brooks, in his capital novel of 'Sooner or Later,' has indeed given

us specimens of the conversation to be heard in the smoking room at the Octagon, which might lead one to believe that club men disdained to speak a sentence without perpetrating an epigram, and literally bubbled over with elegant witticisms or refined puns. The picture, however, as we shall subsequently have occasion more minutely to show, is only true with much reserve and serious modification. The movement against peculiarity of demeanour or eccentricity of conduct, the nervous fear lest everything in manner that is not absolutely neutral in tint, should be stigmatized as ill bred, has almost wholly banished that rollicking abandon of air which characterized the club society of fifty or even twenty years ago. The voice of professed club wits has died out. Perhaps Douglas Jerrold may be regarded as the last of the order; and even in his time those flashes of raillery, the hailstorms of repartees and *bons mots* which used for ever to be bursting upon the company which numbered Selwyn, Sheridan, Fox, and Hook amongst its members, were becoming rarer and rarer. Already "the new tone" had set in, and "the new tone" is essentially antagonistic to the spirit which sanctions or inspires these displays. Exceptions may even now exist. There are still haunts called clubs where conversation that reminds one, only faintly though, of the social intellectual splendour of these bygone times may be heard: but could the club chronicler of the present day by dint of industry as untiring as that put forth by Mr. Timbs, hope to collect a *répertoire* of club stories

at all approaching in point of verve and scintillating wit to the anecdotes which are indissolubly connected with almost every one of the extinct institutions to which we refer?

It is Addison, we believe, who laid it down as a principle that "all celebrated clubs were founded upon eating and drinking, because they are points where most men agree, and in which the learned and the illiterate, the dull and the cunning, the philosopher and the buffoon, can all of them bear a part." This may be true enough, but it is scarcely less a truth that in the case of the clubs of old the opportunities which they afforded for gambling constituted quite as essential and catholic a principle in their formation as the opportunity of dining in pleasanter company, in greater comfort, or at more reasonable charges, than elsewhere. The history of these clubs of the past centres itself in almost every instance round the faro-table and the hazard-board, is little more than a chronicle of losses and of gains at play. *Alea quando hos animos habuit?* Far be it from us to assert the monstrous falsehood, in the face of facts so pregnant and telling as we have before us, that the spirit of gambling has become at all extinct since then. But it is, at least, a fact that it has ceased to be the *primum mobile* of the foundation of clubs. For ourselves we believe that the instinct to risk money on an event as yet unforeseen is simply ineradicable in the British mind. It may develop itself in different manners at different times, but for all that it is still there.

The truest thing would be to say that whereas in the days of Selwyn, Sheridan, and Fox, of Brooks's, Watier's, and Crockford's, it confined the ebullition of its violence pretty much to one section of society, concentrated its force pretty exclusively in one set of local quarters, its influence has in these latter times become more dispersed. Granting, though we question whether it is the case, that it is impossible nowadays to point to any one set of civilized Englishmen so wholly and on such an imposing scale addicted to the passion for play as it was half a century ago, can we not, on the other hand, note the presence of the *furore* for speculation in certain social strata where then it was not? The real fact is, gambling has ceased to be the peculiar vice of the aristocracy, and has become the common and irresistible *penchant* of the mob. It may, possibly, be less intense, but on the other hand it is a great deal less exclusive. Again, with that tendency to self-deception which is so pre-eminently one of our national traits, we are apt to flatter ourselves that because the external development which the gambling spirit has assumed is changed from that once associated with its existence, it has therefore to a great degree passed away altogether. We may here almost re-echo the quotation that we cited above—*Alea quando hos animos habuit?* If it was a commoner thing—and with the instances of aristocratic ruin that we have lately had, can it be said that it was?—some few years ago to hear of large fortunes lost on a turn of the cards, or

on a throw of the dice, does not as much money change hands in a different field of speculation? What cards once were betting is now, with this important addition: whereas the use of cards was mainly confined to one section of the population, the passion for betting is extended through all Englishmen; and every class of Englishmen will bet, and bet freely, on each conceivable event connected with the daily routine of their lives. This phase in the history of speculation is a novel one: because it is of a more diluted and catholic character, it does not follow that it should argue any great improvement. It may be, and, as we have said, is an important change in the constitution of our clubs that one of these many causes has vanished; only it is perhaps as well to remember that we may plume ourselves even too highly on the significance of this fact.

As we have not, however, the least intention of resolving this work into a disquisition on ethics, it may be as well to dismiss the question on which we have naturally been led to touch, and to return to our original theme. It has been said that before the time of Chaucer the student of English literature finds only the crude forms of the yet inchoate English language to occupy his attention, simply because of literature in its proper sense there was none. In the same way the researches of the investigator into the phenomenon of our national club life cannot truly be said to commence before the present century was several years old, simply because anterior to that time club life had.

not become a recognized system, a moving force in our social economy. We have spoken of such institutions as the Rota Club ; but we have also shown that clubs in our modern sense they were not at all. The real truth is, that the progenitor of the nineteenth century club is to be found in the seventeenth and eighteenth century coffee-house. What the life of the former is now, was supplied by the life of the latter then. Every profession, trade, or political party had its favourite coffee-house, just as it now has its special club. There were Nando's and the Grecian coffee-houses for lawyers ; there were Garraway's and Jonathan's for the big men of the city ; the clerical party would muster strong at Truby's ; and instead of at the "Rag," or of the Senior or Junior, naval and military officers would discuss the prospects of the war, or would ventilate their own grievances, at the Old or Young Man's, close to Charing Cross. There were Will's, Button's, or Tom's, in Great Russell Street, where the wits of the period could bandy repartee or exchange epigrams.

Such was the first step towards the modern club ; and, indeed, in spite of the manner in which the old coffee-houses have been supplanted by their more gorgeous and later rivals, there still lingers amongst Englishmen a kind of unconscious affection for the old life. There are at least a dozen taverns in London which are regularly resorted to by the same sets of customers, who, feeling the necessity of a common ground of meeting, choose

rather to realize it in this manner than to find it in the conventional club ; but in the times to which we refer, the coffee-house stood exactly in the place of the club to each one who frequented it. A friend came up to town to consult another on business of pressing importance : he had previously furnished himself with his address, not at his private residence, but at a coffee-house. There he was sure to be found ; or should he be absent, the waiters would be as well acquainted with his movements as his own private servants, and would inform the inquirer as to the hours at which the object of his search might be expected to be in the way. The transition from the actual coffee-house to the legitimate club was at once easy and natural. It must be remembered that though Will's or Tom's looked for the staple of their business to one regular set of frequenters, yet their doors were never closed against the chance customer who chose to pay at the bar on his first entrance the modest fee of one penny. By degrees, as the old *habitués* formed intimacies amongst themselves, and began to possess common centres of interest, they grew to feel the presence of any foreign element in the visitors as an intrusion. Strangers met with a very lukewarm reception, and gradually, taking the hint, they would absent themselves altogether, till only the recognized old faces were left. These, to ensure their social privacy and at the same time to indemnify mine host for any loss that he might sustain, or fancy he sustained, in the falling off of the strange lookers in, levied

amongst themselves an annual subscription, laid down certain rules to be observed by all who resorted thither, and thus the antique coffee-house was expanded or resolved into the modern club. Such, if we are not mistaken, was the origin of White's, such the origin of Brooks's, such of the Cocoa Tree.

If the beginnings of these famous associations were sufficiently humble in their character, they rapidly came to be invested with more dignified proportions. A variety of causes tended towards this end. From the presence of special celebrities amongst their members, these newly-fledged societies rapidly acquired a considerable amount of reputation. Fresh aspirants to the honour of belonging to them were numerous : elections were held, and the list of membership quickly increased. A great change this while was being accomplished upon the face of English society. This was a vast influx of wealth into the population, and wealth brought with it, as was to have been expected, the thirst for novel luxuries and a more ornate style of life. It was not to be expected that the influence of this should be unfelt in the clubs, and thus by degrees, from the simplicity of style in which the early associations were content to conduct their meetings, the way was naturally paved for the elaborate splendour of the joint-stock palaces of St. James's and Pall Mall. It is impossible to separate the history of clubs from the history of society in general : the changes which took place in the economy of the one keep pace exactly with

those which took place in the economy of the other. The coffee-houses were deserted by their former customers and occupants, who quickly discovered the advantages which the new system of social intercourse possessed over the old. That the change was in every way a salutary one cannot be doubted.

With this brief sketch of the rise of club life in England, as it exists among us at the present day, we may terminate our retrospect, and bid farewell to the past. The general theory of clubs, their existing position and influence, we shall set forth in the ensuing chapters.

CHAPTER III.

THE TRUE THEORY OF CLUB LIFE.

Non-club men — Octavius Blogg, Esq. — The principle of Club Life, and the philosophical explanation of its origin — The Club the product of a mutual toleration principle — Objections to Clubs: how far do they tend to promote excessive social uniformity? — How far do they promote extravagance and celibacy? — Disadvantages of Club Life: its publicity; its insecurity — The peculiarities of the British nature point to matrimony — Clubs the teachers of prudence.

IF the club men of London are a distinct class, with strongly defined features of their own, so too are the non-club men. Indeed it would be no bad illustration of the logical principle known as that of dichotomy, to constitute the club in our enumeration of modern humanity the *fundamentum divisionis*, and to distinguish civilized mankind according as it does or does not resort to these social haunts. In this age when clubs abound on all sides in such rank luxuriance, specially adapted for and accommodated to the use and requirements of the members of every conceivable profession and business; when we have clubs for peers not more than clubs for tradesmen, a rigid abnegation of club life is the exception and not the rule. When Dr. Johnson talked of persons as clubbable or the reverse, the qualifications which he had

in his mind's eye were geniality of disposition and a fondness for friendly intercourse in a quiet way. Since the days of the burly lexicographer of Fleet Street we have changed all that, and an unvarying habit of impenetrable reserve or a cynical distrust of our fellow-creatures does not at all necessarily exclude its possessor from the palaces of St. James's or Pall Mall.

On the assumption that contrast is the soul of knowledge, let us see who the non-club men are. In this, *par excellence*, the age of clubs, how are we to classify those who will have nothing to do with them? Upon what principles do they decline, and what are those principles worth? It is unnecessary here to dwell upon those who have the will but not the opportunity to enrol themselves members of one of the institutions which we are discussing. Nothing is worse than a club snob; and of club snobs there are none more despicable than those who are club men because, though they know it to be a financial injustice, they look upon it as a piece of necessary social ostentation. There are certain persons who take a pleasure and a pride in trotting out, on every possible occasion, small traits of eccentricity. They are incarnations of the spirit of contradiction; their movements are inspired by a perpetual straining after the effect of peculiarity. These are the people who calmly assure you that they always travel, as a matter of choice, third class; that they invariably sleep during the most frosty night of winter with their windows open; that they prefer London in Septem-

ber to London in June ; that in fact popular pleasures are their own private abominations. In the same way there is an order, and by no means an inconsiderable one, of men, who steadfastly refuse to enter the precincts of a club, simply because most of their acquaintance are club men. If their business occasionally compels them to dine away from home, they take a gloomy delight in informing you that they have had a chop or steak, as the case may be, at some tavern or restaurant, and in supplementing the announcement with an observation to the effect that they hate "your club dinners with their French kickshaws, and the deuce knows what else," utterly ignoring the fact the while that it is possible to dine quite as plainly, and almost, if not quite, as economically at a well-ordered club as at their own domestic mahoganies. And yet to a certain extent, in Dr. Johnson's acceptance of the term, these men are by no means the reverse of "clubbable." They will entertain you hospitably, will order up for your enjoyment a bottle of "that very particular '34 with the yellow seal," and will make themselves generally pleasant. The only thing is they have chosen to take a blind, and it must be added an unreasoning, dislike to the institution of club life.

Other non-club men there are, differing in some very essential respects from that class just described. Octavius Blogg, Esq., is "a City man," whose name stands high on Change, who is not much past the *mezzo-cammin* of existence, who has an exceedingly comfortable house in

Bayswater, and an income which seldom falls below seven thousand per annum. Dine with Mr. Blogg, and you will enjoy yourself. Mrs. Blogg is agreeable in the way that prosperous matrons usually are agreeable, and the young Bloggs are promising. Blogg himself is all geniality and compliance; nothing of a spirit of contradiction about him; but for all that, though Mr. Blogg has often several spare hours on his hands in the course of an afternoon, and admits to suffering from real *ennui* habitually from six to seven-thirty, his dinner-hour, every day, you will not induce him to become a member of the club. You may assure him that you have private influence at the Polyolbion—your own particular and very favourite haunt; that you are *lié* with all the influential members of the committee, and that by a little judicious pulling of the wires, you would guarantee that he should come on for election at once, and get in without the peril of a black ball. But Blogg will resist the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. It is not that the partner of his wealth and happiness disapproves, on the contrary she encourages, the arrangement which you propose; for Mr. Blogg is in the habit of wandering over the house, restless as an evil spirit, much to the discomposure of the Blogg household, between the hours above specified. “As a young man,” Mr. Blogg will remark to you, “I had something to do besides belonging to clubs, and now”—Blogg, as has been hinted, is little more than fifty—“I prefer my own fireside to any such places. What do I want with clubs?”

I can dine at my house ! As for books, have I not my own library and Mudie's ? I take in 'The Times ;' and if I want to see my friends I would sooner see them at my own table, or in my own drawing-room, than in that dingy little strangers' apartment into which you took me one day at the Polyolbion."

Out of such material as this you will never make a club man. His whole early training has been in an atmosphere in which there was nothing kindred to the club. But with the expression of his own personal dislike of club life Blogg is content ; he does not anathematize the institution ; indeed he is in this respect somewhat of an optimist turn of mind. "Good enough for the rising generation," he will say ; and in the same breath that he politely declines the offer of your vote and influence at the Polyolbion for himself, he will perhaps remark, "You might do it for Charlie, though." There are other types of character, however, which, though resembling Mr. Blogg in their aversion to club life as regards themselves, take care to couple that aversion with a sweeping condemnation of the system in general. They not only tell you proudly that they never belonged to a club in all their lives, but they go on to observe that in their opinion all clubs are, and must necessarily be, evil things, incitements to extravagance, sore destructives of the simple delights of home, the inevitable poisoners of all domestic bliss, the corruptors of human nature, and if not the high roads to perdition, still the certain fomenters of all

that is selfish, ignoble, and mean in the nature of man. As this is a view which is occasionally applauded by matrons of a certain turn of mind, and as the present work is addressed to a female as well as to a male audience, it may be well here to devote a few pages to an examination of the theory of clubs and club life; to an investigation, remorseless and searching, of the good and bad sides of the institution—without fear and without favour.

And let it be understood that we deprecate with the utmost severity anything approaching to bias or partiality. *Amicus Plato: magis amica veritas.* Great as may be the charms of clubs, seductive as the sounds of smoking-room conversation, when the hours are growing small, dear as the delights of the whist-room, snug as our own favourite corner in our own particular chair in the library with our *absinthe* beside us and the last new novel from Mudie's in our hands, we shall not suffer ourselves to be tempted to laud unduly institutions which are the favourite butt of feminine censure. We are not taking upon ourselves the duties of special pleaders; it is the function of the judge which we essay, not that of the advocate.

A club is but a world in miniature; and the theories which have been devised to account for the origin of society might, with certain modifications, be held equally applicable to the formation of clubs. Let it be clearly understood and distinctly laid down at the beginning that the ultimate and essential principle upon which all club

life is based is that of mutual toleration. We have already explained that there are clubs and clubs, and that the tendency of the day is rather to discard the notions of club construction which inspired our ancestors, and to substitute for them ideas of catholicity and comprehension,—to expand rather than to restrict. Just as according to the author of the Great Leviathan, Plato, and other theorists, mankind in the beginning of things, finding that a state of life in which a system of general plunder, pilfering, and violence was the order of the day, was attended with disadvantages too serious to be pleasant, came at last to the conclusion that the most convenient plan would be to agree to withhold their hands from each other, to establish certain rights, and to deposit a jurisdiction over the whole community in the hands of a superior body—the government—bound in its turn duly to exercise the authority with which it was thus invested for the common good of all beneath it; so too has it been with those units of humanity who have decided to form themselves into a club. Their Great Leviathan, their body of superior control, what is it? none other than the committee. Discovering that they are fleeced by *restaureurs*; that coffee-house smoking-rooms and billiard tables are not to their liking; that social variety can be carried to a disagreeable excess; and that domestic comforts require some indefinable supplement, what is the step which these gentlemen take? They form themselves into a club. In consideration of the fact that

the committee of the club thus originated is bound to provide the members with everything that they have a right to expect; to ensure that no sin of omission or commission shall be allowed to pass unnoticed or unpunished; to secure humility and attention on the part of the domestics, good viands on the part of the *cuisine*, and sound wine at reasonable charges on the part of the cellar: each individual voluntarily makes over to the committee his own share in the management of matters, and looks to it for the maintenance of his privileges, the enjoyment of his luxuries, and the assertion of his rights. The analogy might be pursued further, but it is unnecessary.

Mutual toleration then being the real basis upon which all club life must rest, it follows by logical necessity that the advantages which a habit of toleration engenders will, in great measure, be promoted by clubs themselves; and these advantages are legion. For rubbing off the unpleasantly prominent angularities of nature there is nothing like human attrition. The modern club does not, it is true, necessarily involve the idea of any very great amount of enthusiastic social intercourse: at the same time it is the most effectual counter-agent to those qualities which are socially objectionable. The reputation of a bore may be so easily acquired, and when acquired is a stigma so indelible, that the slightest approach to boredom is shunned with a diligent horror. When a man recognizes the rare pos-

sibility of his entrance into the room being a signal for the dismay of its occupants, the chances are that in time he will lose his passion for button-holing his acquaintance, and detailing for the nine hundredth and ninety-ninth time some circuitous anecdote, the *ambages* of which are not capable of any possible application. If clubs do, as there is reason to think they do, contribute to the extinction of bores, the world will be under a debt to St. James's Street and Pall Mall. Society in general may in a loose kind of way apply the title bore: it is the club which, as it were, gazettes the promotion and officially brands the stigma.

The first objection occasionally brought against club life is one of a slightly sentimental description. Clubs, it is said, destroy all individuality of character: instead of natural variety they give us one dead level of artificial uniformity,—one stereotyped phase of conduct, one regulation mould of demeanour. All club men resemble each other. They all imbibe the self-same system of ethics: they all judge whatever can be said or done by reference to one and the same standard. If this sort of thing goes on, it is urged, men will become as little dissimilar from each other as their clothes. The fashions which the hatter or the tailor has set, the wearers of hats and coats have applied to their own natures, and in a very short space of time it will only be possible to differentiate one's acquaintances by their physiognomy. With reference to this argument there are two observations which may be

made. In the first place, great as is the real influence of clubs, it would be overestimating even this, if we were to ascribe to them such a plastic power in the formation of the character of their members. If it is true that there is a tendency just now, as to some extent in all highly artificial times there must be, towards a certain uniformity of character in the case of the frequenters of clubs, this tendency is due rather to the condition of society in general than to the influence of clubs in particular. In the second place, it is probable, or rather certain, that this alleged uniformity is skin-deep only. There is not the least necessity for supposing that it in any way argues incapacity of feeling or imperviousness of heart. The essence of the art of dress is so to array oneself as to ensure a general effect that is striking, and carefully to avoid directing attention to any particular detail. In spite of the gushing school, with its theories of freshness and nature, a man is not a whit the worse because he prefers in a general way in society to behave like his fellows, and not to display any glaring idiosyncrasies of demeanour. Every one hates what are usually called "scenes;" and in this repudiation of eccentricity the hatred of "scenes" finds its legitimate extension and expression.

But—and the objection is generally started amid a little pæan of feminine denunciation—how are clubs to be defended against the charge of being signal incitements to every kind of selfishness and extravagance? Are they

not very hotbeds of indolent indulgence and of thoughtless waste—prolific sources of innumerable evils to the young men of the day? Do they not inculcate a taste for unwarrantable luxuries? Are they not subversive of domestic aspirations or of family bliss? In a word, is it not their tendency to sap the foundations of the home circle, and to lay the seeds of every unprofitable habit? Grave charges these indeed, and brought with unfailing punctuality against the institutions with which we are now concerned, whenever in the height of the silly season Belgravian mothers deplore the prejudice in favour of celibacy, which they assert is the pre-eminent characteristic of the *jeunesse dorée* of the period. In the view of these indignant censors the joint-stock palaces of Pall Mall and St. James's are among the greatest evils of the times—snares and pitfalls to ingenuous youths who, as they are eligible *partis*, might develop in the course of time into model husbands and paragons of heads of households. Once let a young man fairly get entrapped in the toils of the club, and he will never escape from them: once let him take the draught of independent ease which a club is supposed to minister, and a life-long celibacy will be the result.

How can it be otherwise? we are asked. Clubs offer most of the comforts and far more of the luxuries that in a proper state of things should be sought and found only at home. There is no responsibility and no need of thought for the morrow. And as the mothers and sisters,

to say nothing of the would-be mothers-in-law and the wives aspirant, of club devotees pursue these dismal reflections, they draw an absurdly-exaggerated and highly-coloured picture of the life which they conceive to be the regulation kind of existence in the establishments that they detest and dread. Young men are depicted as faring sumptuously every day, dining off a countless series of dishes, for whose manufacture every quarter of the globe is laid under contribution—sipping wine of antique vintage and fabulous price. So long as there exists the counter-attraction of the club for these amphitryons, of what use is it for indefatigable mammas to parade their daughters night after night? In vain in the sight of such a bird will the net of the fowler be spread.

We notice this aspect in which clubs present themselves to a considerable section of the uninitiated merely as an instance of a gigantic fallacy. If it is possible to dine like Lucullus in the club coffee-room, it is also possible to make one's meal on fare whose simplicity would satisfy the austerity of a Cato. Now as a matter of fact for the majority of men who dine regularly at their club, this repast falls very far short in splendour of the magnificence vaguely associated in the popular mind, as a necessary and inseparable attribute, with club fare. For most men a club dinner means a basin of soup, or an atom of fish, a cut off a plain joint, and a pint of wine. In other ways the luxuries and comforts of club life are vastly overrated. It is true that in a well-ordered club

everything which you want can be produced for the asking and the paying ; that you may indite your letters in the writing-room, or meditate over your novel or your comedy in the recesses of the library. But how much is there to be said on the other side of the question ? If you wish for privacy or quiet in a club you can never get it, for a club is a world, and a world in action. You fling yourself upon the yielding cushions of a certain arm-chair whose merits you have habitually tested. If the main object of your repose be contemplation, the restless passing to and fro agitates and disturbs your mind ; if you mean to have a quiet half-hour with your novel, your newspaper, or some more elaborate treatise, which, for purposes of reference, you have disinterred from the library shelves, you are certain to be defrauded of your expectations, and to be button-holed by the most egregious bore of your acquaintance before five minutes are over ; or a waiter walks up to you, and informs you that a gentleman down below is anxious to see you. With the servants at your own house you may deny yourself to anonymous visitors ; there is a difficulty about doing this with the domestics of your club ; and if your nerves are delicately organized, or the season of the year be suggestive of demands for financial settlement, you may conjure up unpleasant visions of a too public interview in the hall below with an imperious dun. An Englishman's house may be his castle, not so an Englishman's club.

Is the influence of club life so effectually and irresistibly antagonistic to matrimony as the "Belgravian mother" would have us believe? It may be, and probably is, true that if a man has reached a certain age, and begins to survey the troubled sea of existence from the calm table-land of middle age without having taken to himself a partner of his sorrows and his joys, his club may be to him instead of a wife. But we should like to know how many instances as a matter of fact could be adduced in which men who have entered a club yet young have ultimately been deterred by its seductive snares from building up for themselves their own Lares and Penates? It is quite true that the club life of London is a phenomenon peculiarly English; but on the other hand it must not be forgotten that Englishmen carry the insularity of their geographical position into their characters. What is common property belongs in reality to no one. The passion for undisturbed and sole possession inherent in the nature of the Briton cannot be gratified by the community of goods which his club affords him. It is an aspiration only to be realized by an obedience to his domestic instincts.

That young men in consequence of the opportunity offered them by clubs should feel a less temptation to precipitate themselves into matrimony than if no such resorts were open to them, is very likely, and matter for sincere congratulation. The practical and prosaic way of looking at life which clubs and club conversation gene-

rate is undeniably a good thing. It may prevent many an impecunious but impressible youth from taking the plunge at a time when his worldly prospects offer no justification for the step, and from an unwelcome experience of the gnomic truth that leisurely repentance is the sure legacy of hasty marriages. If mothers would reflect upon this, they could not but admit that clubs after all may tend very materially towards the ultimate promotion of the real interests of their daughters. Regarded in connection with the *vexata quæstio* of matrimony, clubs deserve to be considered as the salutary antidotes to rash and ill-advised alliances rather than as provocatives to perpetual celibacy.

So much for our view of the true theory of clubs and the moral and social functions of club life. The *pros* and *cons* have been fairly stated, and the reader may draw his or her inference. If we were to add that, independently of the advantages which we have already ascribed to clubs, it might be said that they are to be prized for the influence which they probably exercise on the manners and tone of the day, our remarks would be by no means fanciful. There is no better school for breeding than a good club. At a restaurant you may get as good a dinner, possibly at as cheap a rate as at a club ; there are other libraries, quite as extensive, which you might easily consult ; other rooms, designed for various purposes, which you might use : but the social element of club life would be wanting. And, as we hope to be able to show in the

following pages, this element is a power of real good in our social system. The manners of a past age would not be tolerated in the clubs of the present day, would not have been tolerated even then, had such common and public ground, as clubs afford, of union and meeting, been in existence. Clubs have demolished the social bully just as it is to be hoped they may eventually rid us of the bore. Will anyone say that the three-bottle ordinance would be possible under the club *régime*? Will anyone deny that clubs have done something towards establishing amongst us a kind of code of manners, and of imposing an amount of politeness, for which as a nation we are certainly none the worse, and probably very much the better?

CHAPTER IV.

CLUBS AND WIVES.

Unjust hatred of Clubs by wives—Clubs act as safety-valves for the ebullition of marital wrath—Moral training of Clubs useful for domestic purposes—Club dinners—The Club the developer of home affections—Its antagonism to the Drawing-room not real.

It is to be hoped that the remarks made in the preceding chapter will, in the opinion of those ladies who may honour this work with a perusal, have sufficiently vindicated in their opinion the reputation of clubs generally, as by no means necessarily, nor even practically, antagonistic to the matrimonial interest. Those readers who even now persist in taking this view of club life, are, in plain truth, guilty of a kind of moral anachronism; they are conjuring up an evil which might have had an extensive existence in the past, but which has a very limited one, if any at all, at present. There was a period, say some twenty years ago, when the club as we now have it was an institution invested with all the fresh charms of novelty. It was then by no means a matter of course for every man in polite circles to drop into his club for an hour or so before dinner. The club was taken up by those who were fortunate enough to gain initiation into the ordeal with all the enthusiastic

rapture or devotion of a passionate attachment. It was embraced as one of the sole and ultimate ends of life, rather than as a means subordinate to anything else. Possibly, then, it might have entered into a graceless competition with the sweets of feminine society and the settled happiness of domestic life. But we have changed all that since then ; the gloss of newness has worn off, and the fate which usually attends the mad impetuosity of first love has accompanied this ultra-devotion to clubs. *Naturam expellas, &c.* In this case the "pitchfork" may be said to have been the recently manufactured instrument of club life ; and the "nature," which has eventually returned, what Dr. Mackay terms, in a title to one of his volumes, 'The Home Affections of the Poet.'

"Of all the modern schemes of man
That time has brought to bear,
A plague upon the wicked plan
That parts the wedded pair !
My wedded friends they all allow,
They meet with slights and snubs,
And say, 'They have no husbands now,
They're married to the clubs.'"

So wrote Tom Hood in the 'Comic Annual' for 1838 : but so assuredly would he not write were that excellent series published now. We should very much like to put it to the vote of the wives of London, whether in the event of the inauguration of a woman's Parliament they would or would not vote for the abolition of clubs. Yielding to the influence of traditional calumnies

against these institutions, taking all the misrepresentation with which they have been assailed on trust, it is conceivable that our feminine senators—or should we write simply senatresses or senatrices?—might be led to suggest a verdict of condemnation. But when the bill was read a second time, or when having been, as to a second chamber, referred to the consideration of matrons of long standing and mature years, it was brought back to the lower house of younger married women, rejected, they would, upon reflection, be only too glad that some period had been allowed them for calm reflection and tranquil thought. They would then see, on taking a more sober survey of the situation, how invaluable an institution clubs were in the economy of domestic life; how effectually they might act, and often do act, as a species of “buffer” for dulling the shock of any conjugal clash. We wonder, if any accurate statistics could be got, what it would appear is the actual amount of domestic infelicity mitigated, or perhaps wholly averted, in consequence of the conciliatory agency of clubs. By those who are disposed to assume a critical attitude, it might on the other hand be said that the club in a great number of cases is the ever-living bone of contention between the master and mistress of the household—that Angelina would never have occasion to look remorselessly at, or speak reproachfully to, Edwin were it not for that horrid club. Possibly. But in a matter where issues are so grave as this, we must take an average—must look not

to exceptional instances and experiences, but to such as are of ordinary occurrence. If one were asked whether one would prefer to pass a few hours in the company of a hungry lion in an area limited or unlimited, there is not much doubt as to what the answer of persons indisposed to gratify the appetite of the king of beasts would be. An angry or irritated husband at home is a veritable roaring lion, caged up within a narrow space. He stalks up and down; he stimulates his rage: woe to those who cross his path. But in the institution of clubs, civilization, more thoughtful in this respect than nature, has provided for the comfort of himself and the tranquillity of his wife a sure safety-valve for the ebullition of temper. The irate lord quits the conjugal battle-ground, and goes—where? Where, but to the club? In that atmosphere where unruffled serenity never ceases to rule, and nothing is seen or heard which could roughly jar upon the most sensitive of nerves or the most susceptible of tempers, Edwin is enabled gradually to recover himself. Tranquillity is contagious. An absence of scenes breeds a hatred of them. It is all very well to denounce club philosophy as heartless, flippant, and superficial; but if it be the result of club life, as undoubtedly it is, to teach one to subdue the emotion of anger at petty affairs, the lesson, we affirm, is no despicable one, and one which every wife should be devoutly thankful when her husband has learned by heart. In every well-ordered club it is specially enacted that “No member is in any case personally to reprimand a

servant, but in all cases refer the matter to the committee." Who was the original founder of this supremely sapient provision? We know not; the deponent is silent on the point. But this we know, whoever he was he was a profound philosopher. There are numbers of men who may feel disposed on the spur of the moment to give vent to the promptings of passion, and who, if it was not an understood thing that in no instance was the law to be taken into their own hands, might utter a rebuke to a peccant menial, at once exaggerated and indecorous. A habit is nothing but a repetition of certain acts; and the habit of never losing one's temper, so much to be desiderated in husbands, especially if they have a taste for luxuries which their incomes scarcely warrant, is only to be gained by repeated acts of compulsory self-subjugation. So far, then, from the wife regarding the club as her natural enemy, she should consider the training which it administers as the most serviceable pre-matrimonial discipline which can be administered.

Nor have we yet exhausted the subject. If it be said that club life is apt to instil into the mind of the club man, to a dangerous extent, the idea that the view which the centurion in the New Testament took of existence is universally applicable, and that nothing more is necessary than to bid this man go and he goeth, that the ease and rapidity with which one's orders are obeyed in a club may possibly engender the notion that the same swift and spontaneous sequence must everywhere prevail; how much, and how

much more is there to be urged on the other side of the question? We are now, it must be remembered, looking at clubs simply as preparatives for matrimony, and for a calm career of domesticity. We have already combated the notion that club life, so far as the actual viands go, is extravagant or expensive. Let us proceed a step farther; let us plainly assert that clubs, so far from being the incitements to a too lavish expenditure, are distinctly calculated to be the propagators of economical practices. Very likely a further reform might even yet be effected, and most likely soon will be effected, as regards the rate at which club dinners are charged; but taking them even as they are, is it possible to dine at a rate uniformly as low elsewhere? One must dine, that is if one wishes to live; and the soundness of this hypothesis is only denied by those who share the philosophy of the elder Mirabeau, and who utterly ignore the necessity of such a process. Now at a club the young celibate can dine with far fewer temptations to unjustifiable indulgence than if he trusts for his evening meal to the hospitality of the chance tavern or restaurant. It is easier in the first place to get into a regular groove of economy. One glances at the dinner-card, and one gives one's orders mechanically. The regular club diner is not expected to fare sumptuously. Another advantage is that whereas the young clerk or barrister, or whatever else may be his profession, who owing to the nature of his position is compelled to dine out every day, and who has not the resort of a

club, is never free from the danger of being pounced upon by some chance acquaintance, and then accommodates a modest to an enlarged scale of expenditure ; the club diner is beset by no danger of this kind. In one sense he never dines alone, in another he always does. As he sits at his own little table he sees pass him on every side a constant succession of faces—some strange, some familiar ; he can interchange a few words of chat with his next-table neighbour, but for all that his situation is as much his castle as if it was his house. There is no inducement to give one's mandate for a sumptuous banquet, because others do the same. You might be feasting on potted hippopotamus or cold boiled mutton—might be drinking Clos Vougeot, or stout, no one cares and no one seeks to know ; it is not incumbent upon you to give any order for the good of the house, simply because the house is really your own. The club cad—little Tupkins for instance—may think differently ; but then fortunately such club cads as Tupkins are in a distinct minority.

Clubs too, however paradoxical the assertion may seem, are in other ways calculated to breed those habits which, under other circumstances, when the club man has blossomed into a married man, are precisely the most certain to develop into traits of domesticity. They constitute the great counteractives of the vagabond spirit of youth. A club, what is it but a kind of apology for a home ? The club frequenter of the present is the stay-

at-home of the future. Mr Dickens once wrote a very powerful paper in his serial 'Household Words,' treating of the social phenomenon which by a pregnant metaphor he calls "Dry Rot," one of the characteristics of which he described as a passion for nondescript nocturnal wanderings. The consciousness that he is the supreme, if not the sole, master of a good library, an excellent smoking-room and other apartments agreeable thereto, may well make the young club man, his dinner concluded, very loth to exchange the certain comfort within for the precarious amusement without, and inspire him with a decided unwillingness to quit his snug corner in one of the aforesaid apartments, his book and cigar, or his postprandial chat, in quest of any exoteric attractions. Now we repeat that we have in these tendencies, directly the result of clubs, exactly those germs which, if properly nurtured and trained, may bear fruit in the shape of the above-mentioned "Home Affections." For ourselves, we do not believe that the fullness of a club can ever mean the emptiness of a drawing-room. Clubs are filled, and smoking-rooms are dense with tobacco-clouds and murmurous with the muffled sound of talk, just when the denizens of the drawing-room are not visible.

We have, we believe, now presented the reader with a tolerably synoptical account of the position which the club occupies in the economy of society, and specially of the relation in which it stands towards the drawing-room—the drawing-room regarded in the light of the glory of

the female, as the club may be solely of the male, kind. As we have mentioned at the outset, it is simply in deference to the conventional notions of the world that we have chosen to speak of these two institutions as symbolical of two distinct interests, or typical of two different triumphs. We trust that we have said enough by this time to make it sufficiently plain that they are by no means necessarily antagonistic; that what indeed promotes the welfare of the one promotes also the welfare of the other; that the club at best is only in certain very exceptional cases to men the be-all and the end-all of existence; that as a home to live in it is a fair and salutary substitute for the "more life and fuller" that is exercised under the shadow of the domestic Lares and Penates; that a club training is indeed by no means a bad training for the married man; that it is an excellent school of manners, urbanity, and breeding; and that when the final plunge has at last been taken, and Edwin finds Angelina his own for ever, even then in sundry cases the club may have purposes to fulfil, and even the sacred duties of peacemaker to discharge.

CHAPTER V.

THE FUNCTIONS AND PRINCIPLES OF CLUB LIFE.

Purposes which Clubs and Club Life serve, differ with individuals—
Fumbleton Frizzle—Two distinct tendencies discernible in Clubs
—The tendency to catholicity—The tendency to exclusiveness
—General hints in the choice of a Club.

MEN are of course impelled in their choice of a club by a variety of reasons; just as the notion which they conceive of the uses to which it may be turned is different. To some a club is a mere place of agreeable lounge. The day must be whiled away in some manner or other, and much idleness causes the long hours of the afternoon to hang upon the hands exceeding heavily. With the forenoon it is different. Breakfast judiciously late and discreetly protracted is able *solidam partem demere de die*. It takes a good deal of time to glance through the papers, as the cant phrase goes; and lunch—happy device of luxurious idleness—comes on almost before they are aware of it. But, lunch over, nothing awaits them but the *peine forte et dure* of a blank afternoon. My lady pays calls, my lord prefers receiving them. Dinner at eight: horrid bore; nothing new—happy thought, the club. And a happy thought *par*

excellence to these gentlemen the club is. Men after all bear a marvellously close resemblance to a pack of sheep, and the calm monotony of the club, suiting one, suits every one. Looking out of window is something to do ; and though the faces, seen outside and in, vary little from day to day, that matters not. Five o'clock comes : six, and then it is time to drag the weary footsteps homewards. In the name of reason, in the interests of both the sexes, what would existence be to such men as these if they had not that social safety-valve which they find in the club ?

But utterly lazy do-nothings are not the only persons who utilize the club as a lounge. It may be a lounge, and a very convenient one, to men who get through a large amount of solid hard work in the course of the day—of men whose vocation it is to spend the hours of the forenoon and some of those of the afternoon in sedentary toil, whether in their own libraries or in the less agreeable seclusion of what are usually termed offices or chambers. In either case it constitutes a wholesome break in the business of the twenty-four hours. The look into the club, the glance at the evening papers, the few hurried words of conversation, all these act upon them as a bath of *Æson* ; they entered flurried and wearied, they leave tranquillized and moderately joyous. The sherry and bitters or the tea has had a distinctly soothing effect ; its recipients take a less gloomy view of existence, and are altogether better companions for those with whom they may

be destined to dine than under other circumstances would have been the case.

So much for the club as a mere lounge ; and something of a lounge it must be confessed that to most men it is. The great mass of persons who belong to clubs usually do so for no better reason than that they find it suits them. They have no special reason or purpose to serve by so doing ; they do not expect that their worldly interests will be advanced one jot by the new associations that they form ; they can give no more account of their liking for clubs than the traditional schoolboy could of his hatred for Doctor Fell. *Exceptio probat regulam*, and naturally there are numerous instances of exceptions to this general principle. *Exempli gratiâ*, in the sake of politics ; political club men there are who propose to themselves an aim very definite and quite apart from that of lounging, whether for the sake of having nothing better to do, or as a relaxation from sterner duties ; but as we shall deal shortly at some length with this class, we need not at present dwell more fully on its characteristics. Again, in the case of most class or professional clubs, it will be found that in a great measure they are so far true to their old antitype which must be recognized in the mediæval guild, as to be subservient to some distinctly professional purpose. In connection with this aspect we shall have immediately some amusing little traits of literary and artistic club life upon which to comment. And there is a wide class of men—

old stagers these—to whom the club *is* the be-all and the end-all of their existence; members of one club generally, or, if of more, treating one only as their legal wedded wife, and the rest as mere mistresses, to be laid down, just as they were taken up, at the instigation of a momentary caprice. But these again must be treated of separately.

In the hasty survey of the uses to which clubs may be turned by their occupants, there are one or two special aspects entirely different from any of those to which we have yet alluded, that must not be left out of sight. *Par exemple*: Everyone about town knows Fumbleton Frizzle, he is the heir to his father Sir F. F. in the baronetcy and in the estates—a wealthy magnate of Loamshire, his seat is Loamington Park—ex-county-member, and surcharged as to his veins with the finest blood in England. It is currently said that an ancestor of the Fumbleton Frizzles—Fumbleton is a name which has never been lost out of the family—was a Norman aristocrat when the dynasty of the future conqueror of England was in its cradle. Our friend Fumbleton Frizzle, young in point of years, but prematurely old as regards his aspect, married Lady Godiva Gaddington—a good family, but a new peerage—proud as Lucifer, and said by young Twaddle of the Treasury to be as beautiful as Venus. Fumbleton's tastes are promiscuous; he is a veritable Panurgus Pebbles, and likes to know men of all characters, drawn from every layer of the social strata.

A very good-hearted fellow indeed, and most hospitable ; nothing in the world does Fumbleton like better than to ask his miscellaneous acquaintance to dinner ; nothing is there of which Fumbleton is more fond than to draw together a carefully-made selection of his old bachelor friends : but Lady Godiva would not stand this sort of thing. It might be all very well for Fumbleton to see goodness knows who, before his marriage, but it is quite out of the question now. If Fumbleton does bring home a friend to dine, he must exercise great circumspection ; and circumspection of the kind Lady Godiva expects is precisely that quality from which the generous nature of Fumbleton most conspicuously revolts. What is the result ? Fumbleton arrives at a species of compromise between his wife's exclusiveness on the one hand, and his own passion for indiscriminating hospitality upon the other ; and upon what other ground should the results of this compromise make itself seen than on the neutral soil of one of his clubs ? It is also whispered that Fumbleton can make his club amenable to other purposes even than these ; that he not merely finds it pleasant and convenient to entertain his nondescript acquaintance here, but to transact and to receive a certain portion of his correspondence ; for Lady Godiva, it is rumoured, is the very Lord Burleigh of domestic management, and carries the principle of supervision and inspection to such an extent that Fumbleton would find it difficult, if not absolutely impracticable, to be the sender or the recipient of

any clandestine epistle at his own domestic paradise in Eden Street. Clearly then to such men as Fumbleton—and we merely give him as a specimen of a by no means limited class—the club is a most desirable institution, and the expression of a most ingenious compromise on the part of matrimony with the tastes of bachelordom. Thus again then we see the club in its character of beatific peacemaker, or rather as the actual preventive of possible, nay probable, domestic differences.

Again, a club may be used solely as a lever for securing the great end of social elevation. There are men who live entirely on the strength of the prestige with which membership of a good club invests them. This class, too, we must for the present pass over. We have, however, indicated, clearly enough and lengthily enough for this stage of our work, what principles may, and as a rule do, govern a good number of men in the selection of a club. It remains for us in this chapter to say something on the subject of the genesis and rationale of clubs themselves.

As a general principle it may be laid down that clubs at the present day must belong to one of two orders; either they must be established, or originally have been established, for the special good and advantage of one class of the community, for the special promotion of one order of interests; or else they must from their earliest commencement have rested upon a pure basis of catholicity. Now, *à propos* of these points, it may be remarked that there are at this present moment two distinct ten-

dencies in clubs. On the one hand, there is a tendency in favour of increased exclusiveness; on the other, there is a movement in favour of extended catholicity. It will be by carefully taking both these signs into consideration, conscientiously attaching their full weight and importance to each, that we shall be able to form some notion of what the true ideal of every club is. It is in the case of such clubs as those to which we have adverted as being of a professional caste, that we see the movement in the direction of catholicity in force. This is to be accounted for in a very easy manner. Excess of exclusiveness in such instances simply means the rampant reign of shop. Get a number of men together who are equally interested in one subject, or engaged in one walk of life, and the consequence is you will find that, in their leisure hours even, their movement is only circular. You cannot get them out of their regular groove. As a result, and a very inevitable one, they soon come to bore each other. The old blood stagnates; there is a craving for new. Anything to widen the sphere of interest, to enlarge the margin of small talk. In the case of some professions this phenomenon may not make itself so obtrusively obvious. For instance, the army embraces men drawn from such different ranks, of social antecedents so widely antagonistic, of natures so mutually opposed, that in this case the view which we have advanced fails to hold good. Yet even here we see clubs, which it was the original intention of their founders to limit to one of the services, thrown open also to the other.

But there are other clubs which, in a much more marked and decisive manner, have, though in the first place commencing with all these intentions of exclusiveness, ultimately cast aside every such pretence. The club lately known as the Civil Service, and now as the Thatched House, may be taken as one illustration; the Garrick, not to mention a whole host of smaller and more obscure associations, as another. It is true that in the case of these latter bodies, there is usually some kind of attempt made on the part of every proposed member to describe himself as possessed of some literary, artistic, or scientific qualification; but this qualification is widened to such a degree, that at last it comes to be little more than a dead letter and a sham.

As to the movement in the direction of its exclusiveness, we may illustrate our meaning a little more fully. Something very analogous to what occurred with reference to the coffee-houses of yesterday takes place with reference to the clubs of to-day. A club is originally established without the prescribed test of any qualification whatever for its members. It is recruited, and decided to be recruited, from no particular class; it exists chiefly for the good of the community. But as it grows these facts become apparent. In the first place, the mere accident of locality perhaps, or some other chance cause or aggregate of causes tends to make one particular element felt with especial force in its constitution. There is thus an unavoidable tendency towards a species of cliquism. Hence the first cause

of exclusiveness. Secondly, it is found that to preserve the respectability of an institution, there is no safe plan but to limit the area of the qualification of its membership; and so the whole phenomenon to which we referred is to be accounted for.

The moral of all which seems to be, that every club should be made as general as is possible, or as is compatible with its members attaining to a definite standard of desirability. There must be neither repression nor an unreservedly free admittance. It is the duty of a committee to exercise a diligent and an active discretion. As for the selection of clubs by intending club men, there are certain broad rules to be laid down which do not admit of much deviation. As a rule, the larger the club is, the better. Small clubs, as purposes of general resort, are to be eschewed. What London is to a country town, that the large club is to the smaller one. In the case of the latter, you are almost compelled by the laws of space to be on speaking terms with most of your neighbours. There is no pretence of privacy, no possible escape from boredom. In the former each of these are at least attainable blessings. It was, we believe, Theodore Hook, than whom no man ever had a better insight into, or a more delicate appreciation of, the rationale or the true ideal of club life, who summed up the whole matter in these pregnant words of advice, "If you have a club, have a large one. Every club must have its bores, but in a large club you can get out of their way."

CHAPTER VI.

THE CARLTON.

Professional Clubs, their significance — Origin and development of Political Clubs peculiarly English — The Carlton — A visit there in the afternoon — *Unda salutantum* — Lord — — The Earl of B — — Nature of the Carlton Fund — The Carlton before the House, and after — The personnel of Politics — The "Gossip" of the Clubs: its worth — The value of political small talk — Mr. Dapper, the Whipling — Mr. Dapper's functions — Mr. Flowett — Mr. Flowett's system of administration — Mr. Flowett at the Carlton.

ONE of the greatest changes which has of late years crept over the spirit of our club life, has already been passingly noticed. The idea of utilizing clubs—and we use the word now in its proper and modern sense, one very different from its ancient, as has been sufficiently shown—for the practical purposes of professional life is a novelty, comparatively speaking, of the most recent date. The innovation is certainly one which is in singularly good keeping with this restless existence of earnest trifling that we patronize so much during the latter half of the nineteenth century. It is precisely analogous to what has occurred elsewhere, and furnishes a very typical example of the manner in which we have decided that an idea of business ought to interpenetrate a career of pleasure.

If there is any project in heaven or earth which a select company of English gentlemen wish to discuss, be it to organize a society for the conversion to Christianity of some obscure heathen tribe, to establish a joint-stock bank, or to canvass the best measures to adopt for the propagation of some new patent, the initiatory step in all cases is one and the same. "St. Peter's!" says Sir Charles Coldstream, "why, half-a-dozen gentlemen would meet together, dine, pass resolutions, and in less than a twelve-month's time a building far finer than St. Peter's would be built in London; nay, if it were necessary, St. Peter's would be bought up and transferred bodily!" And a dinner is with us the inevitable prelude to the actual accomplishment of whatever can be accomplished, and to the attempted accomplishment of everything that can not. It is simply, we take it, an extension of this principle or instinct which has prompted the erection of so many clubs with professional names and pseudonyms, originally established for the promotion of professional interests. These societies have, of course, something more in all cases than a mere fictitious influence; they may often, and often, we are disposed to think, do, contribute in no small way towards the keeping up of a wholesome *esprit de corps*, and the dissemination of an intelligible and excellent *entente cordiale* between members of similar vocations in life. But in the instance of no profession have clubs ever had, or have they now, such an active and living weight as in that of the profession of politics.

Rightly then shall we commence our survey of nineteenth-century club life with a series of comprehensive glances at the club political.

What the political clubs of the past were we have seen. Their nomenclature was a mere debasement of the term : they were little better than the discussion forums to be met with now in the purlieus of Fleet Street. The political club, as it exists amongst us, was the work of two distinct influences : of the intense political enthusiasm introduced into parties during the momentous period of the first Reform Bill, on the one hand ; and on the other, of the craving for greater social luxury and structural splendour, that naturally followed in the wake of the influx of wealth into England at the commencement of the century. High party-feeling generated the necessity for secret party organization. Each army alike that met nightly on the battlefield of St. Stephen's required an opportunity and a place, where councils of war could be held, solemn conclaves assembled, ways and means devised, and the best points of attack discussed, without fear of interruption and amid the inspiring atmosphere of mutual confidence. That the place thus chosen should participate in the refined air and the decorative accessories, a taste for which had set in decisively and generally, was not less indispensable. Both of these requirements were realized in the political club, as it exists, in this year of grace, in the regal thoroughfare, which takes its name from what was once the favourite pastime of English lords

and gentlemen, in the Park of St. James. It is within the precincts of these establishments and such establishments as these that the fate of the country has before now been settled, that the final measure has been resolved upon, which was necessary for the salvation of a cabinet, or that it has been determined to try yet another throw of the dice-box before there should be an appeal to the nation. English as the constitution of all clubs essentially is, that of the political club is exceptionally English,—the direct product and the immediate consequence of the freedom and confidence which reign supreme in our national political life. Under no other system of government would they be possible. Imperialism would not tolerate them: they would be foreign to the genius of democracy. Party rule and perfect freedom of political action,—this is the double germ from which they have sprung.

The Carlton Club in Pall Mall is sufficiently well known in appearance to enable us to dispense with any preliminary description of the exterior which it presents; and an exterior of a highly *distingué* character it is, as befits one of the visible head-quarters of the great constitutional party in the state. The guide books will tell you that the red polished granite comes from the marine quarries of Peterhead. If you are strolling down Pall Mall with a friend whose political sentiments happen to be liberal, he will inform you with reference to this same granite, that its effect against the dead white stone is as

bad as even the ingenuity of "the stupid party" could devise: if, on the other hand, your Mentor of the hour is himself imbued with conservative tenets, he will straightway commence to dilate on the bold beauties of the contrast of hues, and will remark how baldly insignificant is the plain frontage of the neighbouring Reform, the building of which dates from much the same period as that of the Carlton. After all, politics are the nearest approach in the case of the masculine nature to what love is in the case of the feminine. Politics and love, whichever it may be, they have each of them alike pretty much the same power of fixing the focus of the vision in accordance with the promptings of prejudice, and of distorting the medium of sight to suit the foregone and unjust conclusion of the spectator. Let a woman only take a dislike to him, and she will be able to pick a hole in the countenance of an Adonis. Either he has a slight squint, or his legs are not perfectly straight, or his hair falls short of auburn by a shade too closely approximating to red. Detest a man's politics, and you will soon learn critically to despise the local habitation which he has adopted. The building is too obtrusive, or else it is dismally retiring; it bears upon itself the impress of a vulgar passion for demonstrative expenditure, or is else too plainly the creation of an ignoble parsimony.

Being entirely free from political bias ourselves, it being a matter of complete personal indifference to us whether

Mr. Gladstone demolishes the Irish Church, or Mr. Disraeli demolishes Mr. Gladstone, or Mr. Vernon Harcourt, coming down like a wolf on the fold, utterly eclipses the splendour and prestige of both, we may be allowed, without any imputation on our impartiality to express our opinion that the appearance of the Carlton Club is very fine indeed, that it is even noble, and that on the whole it contributes as much to the ornament of Pall Mall as any of its structural associates. Perhaps the reader may wish, as he lounges down this historically famous thoroughfare on a bright sunny afternoon in June, to look up some friend, his county member, or his old college chum, at this chosen haunt of constitutional statesmen. Very likely he may have already made one or two futile attempts to get a few minutes' conversation with him in the lobby of the House; but he has found what many wiser and better men have experienced before, that it is entirely hopeless to exchange confidential communications on that spot, agitated as it always is by constant passings and repassings, by admonitions from the shrill-voiced policeman to clear the path, and by the thousand demands made on his friend's time by constituents and others who systematically prowl about the entrances for exactly the same purpose as our hero himself, and who, however occupied at the moment he may be, rush in for the purpose of button-holing their representative with an intrepidity very much the reverse of angelic. "Meet me at the Carlton at four to-morrow" is the invitation, and the valediction which the distracted senator gives you.

Four o'clock has come, and you keep your appointment with that exemplary punctuality which it is natural you should observe, seeing that the probable object of your desired interview is to ask the great man to use his influence towards getting your son a nomination for a parliamentary clerkship, or to endeavour to hurry on the passage of that particular Railway Bill in which you have a special interest.

The office of porter at any of the clubs is not eminently suited to a highly sensitive or delicately organized temperament. At the Carlton it is exceptionally trying ; and during the spring of the political season its causes of irritation may be considered to have reached their culminating point. About this period of the day and of the year, there are always sure to be a considerable number of visitors—provincial martyrs—distractedly inquiring for different members of the Legislature, who by reference to the Directory—a volume as objectionable in some ways as it is useful in others—they have discovered belong to the Carlton Club. The worst of these applicants is that they will seldom take “No” for an answer. If the object of their search is pronounced not to be within at the time they ask, they immediately proceed to inquire when he will be within, where he has gone, why ; how long he will be absent, to say nothing of a host of minor interrogations, all framed apparently on an idea that amongst the various duties which devolve upon a club porter, none can be of more primary importance than that he should keep him-

self chronically acquainted with the movements of each individual member.

But the hall-porter at the Carlton, who is receiving and responding as well as may be to these ceaseless inquiries, is admirably trained to his functions—is a master in the art of composure, and so suave withal in his address, that even the puffing agriculturists, who have been lingering in the region of Pall Mall in the hope of catching their member at his club about this hour, are fain to accept the assurance that Mr. So-and-So is not within, that he has not been to-day, and very probably will not be, not merely with a suppression of all incredulity or dissatisfaction, but even with an expression of thanks.

You, however, have been more fortunate in your quest ; and during the few minutes that you reposed yourself on the yielding seat in the hall, awaiting your friend's arrival, —the Carlton, in the spirit of a very rigid and not very hospitable conservatism, will not admit of such a thing into its constitution as a waiting-room for strangers—you have a capital opportunity of observing certain phases of the life of the celebrated institution on whose premises you are. Everything depends at this club on the hour of day at which you see it. You have arrived very opportunely just now for viewing one side of its existence at any rate. It is Thursday, a Government night at the House, and a more than usually vivacious and important debate is expected. There is a heavy whip on, and symptoms of the severity of the flagellation are observable from your posi-

tion in the waiting-hall at the Carlton. Presently, as you are seated on the morocco-covered couch, there passes hurriedly on your right hand up the entire flight of stairs an official-looking gentleman, who straightway commences to look round about him with a vigilant and all-penetrating eye. He sees a knot of two or three emerging from the glass door of the morning room, a little in front of you on the left. They are button-holed in an instant. One, a youngish man in appearance, moves a little apart from his companions and beckons off the official new comer. He is ambitious of making a speech to-night, and the object of his inquiries is to ascertain how far his aspirations will dovetail with the arrangements of his party. These pass on, but you have still fresh objects for your contemplation. The Carlton may boast in an eminent degree of possessing amongst its members some of the most curious specimens, in point of appearance, of noble and venerable manhood, that are probably to be discovered in this realm. You see, at least you may see if you will but look through the opening door which leads into the morning room, a short sturdy form, habited in a suit of complete black, with coat of a somewhat antiquated cut-away design, and with face, *prononcé* as regards its features, bent over a newspaper, which the possessor of the aforesaid form is evidently intent upon studying. If you saw him elsewhere than in the Carlton Club you would at once pronounce him to be a confidential servant, say head-butler, in a steady old conservative family. In point of fact,

however, the object of your gaze is himself no other than the noble head of a noble house. Despite the eccentricity of his costume, you have before you the well-known Lord ——, one of the greatest authorities of the time upon railway law.

“Singular person,” you murmur to yourself as there suddenly hobbles by you a personage not less remarkable in his way than the celebrity who has just disappeared. Swathed, as to his neck, with a thick woollen comforter—remember this is sultry June of which we are speaking—surmounted, as to his stout if somewhat curved frame, with a dark-blue greatcoat, which has now arrived at the iron age of its existence, whose front is lavishly interspersed with huge brazen disks, that do duty as buttons; a hat of nap singularly lengthy and scrupulously brushed the wrong way; you may at first feel disposed eventually to inquire whether the hero of this eccentric appearance is not some superannuated menial—say a coachman—who, in condition of his long and valuable services, is retained as a pensioner upon the establishment. But as the old gentleman wends his way onwards he is greeted with numberless reverent obeisances, which plainly tell you that he is some considerable personage. He is, indeed, none other than the Earl of B——, who won his way some twenty years since to the honours of the woolsack, and who is at this moment esteemed the greatest exponent of railway laws within the four seas. His lordship may, perhaps, be making for St. Stephen’s, whither he never goes save

by the unfailing medium of his feet. His tread is not very firm; that is not surprising considering his years, and a good stout staff—you can scarcely call it a stick—is at once an effective pioneer and pillar of his path. There is no more regular *habitué* at the Carlton than Lord B——. He seldom, indeed, stays long, and never stays late. But, rain or shine, you are perfectly certain to find him within the precincts of the club every afternoon when the hour-hand of the clock points to half-past three. Four hours later, and his lordship will be found at White's, and so ends his club life for the day.

But if we were to endeavour, in this veracious chronicle of club life to give a pen-and-ink sketch of each senatorial celebrity that haunts the lobby and the rooms of the Carlton, space would fail us. We will glance at the club under some other of its social phases.

“No use belonging to the Carlton,” says young Fitz-Warrenne, whose father, as one of the county members for upwards of half-a-century, has taken care to procure by his interest an *entrée* for his son into that charmed centre of club life, “unless you are in the House. That’s the only way in which the club is to be enjoyed, or in which any real fun is to be got out of it.” And it must be confessed that the popular idea of the existence passed at such institutions attains the dimensions of an absurdity. It is, we believe, the firm conviction of the outside world that if you belong to the Carlton you must know everything; that the very atmosphere of the building is over-

charged with quite as many authentic rumours and presages of the future, as ever was the air of Prospero's island, and that you have but to take your station in the coffee-room, the smoking-room, or any other of the apartments which our senators affect, to be as much behind the scenes, politically speaking, as you could be had you devoted long years to a systematic initiation into the mysteries of Downing Street. This is a mistake, a delusion, and a sham. Of course the Carlton, like every club, has certain features and characteristics peculiar to itself. Some of these we have witnessed; but in the main it is much like other palaces of its order. The only difference is that the propagation of a definite political code forms its *raison d'être* and the basis of its existence. And in reality the strict political administration and influence of such an establishment is of the nature of an *imperium in imperio*, a phenomenon not by any means on the surface, and hidden even from nineteen-twentieths of its members. In the provinces it is customary to regard the Carlton as the Palladium of the constitution, and to look upon each one of its members as surrounded with a nimbus of conservative splendour, and able to summon to his assistance, should it at any moment be required, in the course of a contested election, half a legion of angels, in the shape of an indefinite number of hundreds of pounds. Now it is perfectly true, that at the Carlton, just as in the case of the Reform, there is a species of secret-service fund out of which the sinews of war are often forthcoming for

an eligible candidate ; but it is very much the reverse of true that because you are a member of the Carlton, and may be a candidate for a borough or a county, you have *ipso facto* a claim upon this store of capital. There is further a notion current in certain quarters that every member of the Carlton, in addition to his regular yearly subscription, pays also a certain sum for the general advancement of the political principles of the Carlton in a vague sort of way,—a contribution in fact to the above-mentioned secret-service fund. This too, is a vulgar and a characteristic error. Neither is there such a tax levied upon the pockets of members of the Carlton as a body, nor does the fact of membership pave for its possessor any such royal and inexpensive road to the honour of the legislature. If there were no Carlton in existence the money which is subscribed within its walls would still be forthcoming to be spent in the particular direction in which it is consumed. There would still be found the very small and select band of country gentlemen of estate who think that the outlay of a thousand pounds is more than reimbursed by the discovery of an eligible candidate for that quarter of the country in whose political destinies they feel an interest. The advantage of the Carlton as an institution is that it brings these personages together, that it constitutes a common rendezvous for them : in a word, that it economizes their trouble.

But we repeat, save at exceptional times, the political purposes and nomenclature of the Carlton do not make

themselves generally apparent. If you are a member of either House of Parliament, an active partisan with an extensive political acquaintance, there is plenty of genuine amusement and instruction to be extracted from the club. Much of this, however, would be gained under other circumstances ; all that the Carlton does is to give you the *entrée* of a splendidly furnished house, perfectly appointed in every respect. Amongst your own circle you will, of course, get as much gossip as you like : wherever one or two are gathered together, in the name of business or pleasure, there will gossip always abound. But unless you have a community of interests with this circle, you might spend three-fourths of your life within the walls of the Carlton, and not know one-tenth as much of what is going on in the political world as the quidnuncs who divide their lives between the tobacco-smoke of Stone's coffee-house and confidential communications with the hangers-on of the lobby of the House. What social connecting link, for instance, can there be between little Tuppins, the solicitor, who got into the Carlton by no one exactly knows what back-door, and is scarcely spoken to by any one, and the Westminster celebrities who concoct schemes which are to save cabinets or ruin ministries ?

During the Session there are two periods of the day at which the appearance of the Carlton is exceptionally animated. It is half-past seven ; there is a rush of members from the House, all of them clamorous for

dinner : an uncommonly trying time for the *chef*, but an hour most favourable for the interchange of comments on passing events. Every minute fresh relays of loungers stream in from St. Stephen's, primed to overflowing with all the very latest gossip extant. But the talkers stand together in select groups, and the winged words are not discharged broad-cast in that catholic and indiscriminating manner which is supposed to be characteristic of political club converse ; at intervals you may notice a servant glide up noiselessly to one of these little knots, and place into the hands of one of the members composing it an envelope of official appearance, for an immediate answer to which a messenger is now in waiting. The letter enclosed is read over swiftly but carefully ; its contents are important. Within the last ten minutes the aspect of things in the House has changed ; a division will, it is expected, be brought on that night, and may indeed be imminent any hour after ten. The recipient of the letter is asked whether his attendance may be counted upon within the next half-hour or so, as it is wished by the chief of his party that he should rise to make a few remarks in the House on a certain point in the bill, to which it is desirable to call attention.

These are the ordinary scenes at the Carlton to be witnessed any day when Parliament is sitting. But the Carlton has its great nights, and, to be viewed in the full flood-tide of its existence, it ought to be entered then. Suppose that for four hours at the House of Commons,

say from 9:30 P.M. to 1:30 A.M., there has raged a hot party-fight, such an one as was an everyday occurrence when the Reform Bill of 1868 was *in transitu*. At last it is over, the division has taken place, and St. Stephen's is cleared of its latest members. But the suspension of existence at Westminster is but the signal for its commencement in Pall Mall. Look up at the windows of the Carlton, they are ablaze with light, and will continue to be for some hours to come. The smoking-room is a scene of brilliant animation. Here the battles which have already been fought in the arena of the House are fought once more over again. Small passages of arms, of which the public will know nothing when it reads over the columns of the debate in its morning's 'Times,' are diligently dwelt upon and systematically explained. The members of the Carlton whom you see to-night are great upon the *personnel* of politics. There is nothing like gossip of this order for robbing the science of statesmanship of its philosophical character, and reducing it to a mere scheme of individual agency, wire-pulling, and scene-shifting. There are persons who will tell you that the success of a measure in the House simply means the triumph of a great principle. Confide that notion to these diplomatists of the smoking-room—they will pooh-pooh your credulity to your face. In these days we have done with principles. They may be all very well in their way, but they are not business. If you want to win a division, you must drill your men. It is a question of strategy.

It was, we believe, young Lord Milford in 'Sybil,' who declared that the success of the Liberals on a certain occasion was entirely due to the fact "that they dined their men more than the Conservatives." That may be a *reductio ad absurdum* of this view of political leadership, but the gist of such conversation as that, which you may listen to to-night, points in the direction of the conclusion thus indicated. You have before you between a score and half-a-hundred of our senatorial body. Their grilled bones are consumed, and over a late cigar they discuss the pitched battle of the evening before they retire to rest. The triumph of principles! Ridiculous. The true fact of the matter is that Gladstone cannot keep his temper, and a man who does not know how to manage himself is scarcely likely to know how to manage a party.

"Gossip"—that is the only proper word by which to allude to what is publicly called the talk of political clubs. Take it for what it is worth, and it is amusing: assume it to be the expression of exceptional enlightenment or political knowledge, and you will at once find yourself dragged into a sea of endless inconsistencies and puzzling contradictions. You will hear, as we have hinted, of the personal motives which induced A. to be so bitter in his opposition to B.'s measure, and of the extreme likelihood there is that C. will prove but a broken reed to lean upon, unless D. does for him what he has so long expected. But the clubs now-a-days are not to be relied upon as oracles. The London correspondent of provincial journals

continues still, it is true, to amuse his readers with a series of monstrous and impossible rumours, which he represents as having been originally promulgated at the Carlton or the Reform. He will announce that the Government have hit upon some novel method of disendowing the Irish Church, or that the Opposition are ready with a counter-scheme, which is to cut the ground entirely from beneath their feet: and he will further state this pure invention of his own as the latest *on dit* at the Carlton. He might just as well have informed his provincial public that he derived the intelligence from the Queen the last time he had the honour of a *tête-à-tête* dinner at Buckingham Palace. The impossible reports affiliated to clubs are innumerable. As a rule, infinitely more reports are started, and more "gossip" is heard, in drawing-rooms than in clubs.

The truth is that in consequence of sundry features of the time, political clubs are fast ceasing to fulfil the function that they once performed of being the prime and exclusive depositories of secret schemes of party action. "First intelligence" of anything like a genuine order is becoming more and more a commodity which it is impossible to manufacture. The ramifications of modern journalism are so infinite, its activity so vigilant, and its sources of information so authentic, that immediately a report or rumour gains the slightest colour of plausibility, it usually appears in print. Thus intelligence, which only a few years ago first transpired to the world at large

through the medium of club gossip, is now generally conveyed to the public at large through the columns of the press. The political gossip in which clubs are popularly supposed so richly to abound, assumes the character rather of a commentary on what is already known, than a text in the shape of original facts, which are secrets from the outside world.

But if the light small talk, which floats upon the surface of club life, is not to be regarded as an embodiment of oracular wisdom, or an enshrinement of infallible prescience, it by no means follows that the action of clubs upon political life is the less valuable or the less real. If it is true that political clubs in a general way tend to consolidate and unite the members of the various political parties, they are not without certain special advantages as well in this direction. Club gossip may not be a thing, which is to be accepted in its entirety as necessarily veracious, but, just as a straw when flung up shows which way the wind blows, so too does the ever-shifting weathercock of the tattle of the club smoking-room enable its careful student, from time to time, to ascertain the direction in which the public opinion of those who take an active part in political life may be setting. It is a kind of barometrical index of the influences which periodically prevail; it furnishes those whose business it is to observe them with most invaluable signs of the times. If you only know how to set about it, you may detect the attitude and temper of the rank and file of a political party from the symptoms

which are presented to your observation in clubs. This is the reason that Mr. Dapper, a Conservative whipling, is such an indefatigable *habitué* of the Carlton. This is the reason why he sacrifices his Sunday mornings to roving about the precincts, not merely of this but of other similar institutions within a radius of a hundred yards of Pall Mall. Mr. Dapper has taken up political life as a profession. The fate of his party in a forthcoming division is the sum of his personal interest. He finds his keenest excitement in a contested election; nothing in the world pleases him more than a sharp bout between two rival champions versed in the tactics of parliamentary debate; and he can find no topic of conversation more engrossing than the calculated composition of possible majorities or minorities. Mr. Dapper is emphatically a useful man to the cause which he honours by his support. He is not a brilliant orator; he knows little or nothing of the art of rhetorical fence; he has no insight into principles, but then principles are not exactly what we care about now; he has at any rate a glimmering insight into the elements of practical administration, and that is enough; he looks upon politics as a game of chess—success is dependent upon moves—to move well, you must know the nature of the situation. This, Mr. Dapper makes it his special business to discover.

One lounge on the Carlton he will incidentally interrogate on his view of the tactics adopted in the last division. The reply is given in an off-hand manner, but

Mr. Dapper notes it down diligently in the tablets of his memory. The result is, that when Mr. Dapper has completed the circuit of some half-a-dozen political clubs conducted upon principles such as these, he is in possession of a very considerable body of working-party information. Mr. Dapper is notorious for his memory, and the tenour—nay, in some cases, the particular words—of each reply to his leading question is conscientiously treasured up. The air with which So-and-So received Mr. Dapper's suggestion that such and such a point in such and such a bill should be modified, was not necessarily a party question or else should be struck out altogether, is noted down with unfailing punctuality; for detail of this description is Mr. Dapper's strong point. Mr. Dapper is thus a very useful man indeed; and if you wished to institute inquiries as to the exact nature of the cohesive strength of the Conservative party, you could go to no better-informed person. If there is a weak point, any flaw in the *callida junctura* of political union, any suspicion of disaffection, actual or potential, Mr. Dapper is the man to give you warning. He it is who will let you know at once what are the overtures you must make if you desire to secure So-and-So's vote; how Brown is to be conciliated, and how, if you desire to do so, you may most effectually pitch Jones overboard. Mr. Dapper is, in fact, a very remarkable and useful man. If you wish to observe him in his glory, you have only to look in any Sunday morning, between 12 and 6, at the Carlton, and you will have a

good chance of seeing him engaged in button-holing this member, and now employed in whispering confidential inanities into the ear of that. Mr. Dapper unquestionably is a very rising man; and it is Mr. Dapper's indubitable activity which mainly organizes for such institutions as the Carlton Club one of the spheres of utility to which we have already referred.

Hitherto we have regarded the Carlton as a club principally peopled by members who have also the honour of belonging to the lower House of Parliament. It will of course be understood that under this head we have been able only to include a small proportion of those who are regular *habitués* of the establishment. When Mr. Dapper takes in hand one of his periodical explorations of the political sentiment of the hangers-on of the Carlton, he has to do naturally with those who are not as well as those who are in the House. There are men possessed of a considerable degree of political influence in the country, who are yet not invested with any representative honours; and Mr. Dapper will tell you repeatedly that if you wish to find out which way the fickle breeze of national sentiment is blowing in political matters, it would never do merely to limit your inquiries to such members of the Carlton as are also members of the House of Commons. Now the Carlton naturally numbers amongst its corporate proprietary a considerable proportion of aspirant legislators. There are plenty of persons who have contrived to procure their introduction into this asso-


ciation, simply because they regard such a step as one of the best preliminaries for successfully securing their *entrée* into the active arena of St. Stephen's; and thus the Carlton Club becomes not only the rendezvous of senators *in esse*, but of senators *in posse*, one of the best recruiting grounds which the parliamentary drill-sergeant can have for the hustings. No person knows this better than Mr. Flowett.

Who is Mr. Flowett? Mr. Flowett is simply the head election agent of one of the great parties in the State, quite as indispensable to the carrying on of the Queen's government, in his own opinion, as the Premier himself. Mr. Flowett is not in the House, exactly; but he is very much of the House. And it is pretty generally believed that he can place in that greedily-coveted locality anyone upon whom he chances to cast a favourable eye. Is any member of the Cabinet consulted by some friends as to the prospects of the party, or the probable nature of coming events and future policy? The invariable reply is, "Go and see Flowett; he is the man to tell you everything." Is an opulent manufacturer inspired by a sudden passion to obtain a seat in Parliament? It is to Mr. Flowett that he has to apply. Indeed, so comprehensive is the nature of Mr. Flowett's duties, and so studiously mysterious is the method in which this gentleman performs them, that there are a great number of persons who would tell you that Mr. Flowett is a far more influential personage than the Chancellor of the Exchequer; for is it

not Mr. Flowett who, in his own private apartment in the great offices in Guelph Street, loves to issue his orders far and wide to his provincial recruiting-sergeants, directs the national will, raises a hurricane of enthusiasm, or quells a storm of discontent? It is Mr. Flowett, too, who can at a moment's notice organize petitions in favour of ministerial measures, and cause to well to the surface a whole series of those bubbles which indicate the popular dissatisfaction with the policy of his opponents. All this, and much more, can Mr. Flowett do, but by what precise means no one entirely knows; for it is a favourite saying of Mr. Flowett's that, like the mole, he conducts his operations underground.

Go down to Guelph Street, and you will see Mr. Flowett in his glory. Bored with work, he tells you he is; but then that is exactly the condition of things which suits him best, for Mr. Flowett loves to be and to seem busy. It is so in the lobby of the House. Mr. Flowett has no sooner left off talking with this member, than he is button-holed by that; and if you chance to be desirous of saying a few words to him presently, he will just turn round and graciously hint that if you will wait ten minutes longer, he will spare you certainly not less than one second and three-quarters.

It is therefore Mr. Flowett on whom in an eminent degree devolves the special duty of discerning in such institutions as the Carlton eligible objects for the co-operative advancement of the reserve fund of the club, to



whose existence and organization we have already alluded. And Mr. Flowett executes his business to perfection. He is endowed with a happy knack of taking the measure of a man's ability and usefulness at once. It may be the boast of the Government that it can make peers; it is the boast of Mr. Flowett, and not an unfounded one, that he has made more members of Parliament than any constituency in England.

Next to the lobby of the House, or his own private offices in Guelph Street, there is no place where Mr. Flowett is more in his glory than within the precincts of the Carlton Club. During the session he cannot enter that renowned establishment without being waylaid by eager inquiries on every side. "What's this I hear, Flowett, that they're going to shelve the so-and-so bill?" "Is there any truth, tell me, that Blank is about to resign his seat?" "Flowett, I was told this morning, on unimpeachable authority, that Smith had been closeted with you for one hour and a half; does that mean the Chilterns?" Questions all of which the sapient Flowett, standing perfectly erect meanwhile, the white rose, typical of Toryism, blooming in his button-hole against a background of watered silk—dress is a great point of Mr. Flowett's—answers precisely in the manner that suits him best. He can be alternately as mysterious as the oracle of Delphi or as garulous as a school-girl in her teens. There is nothing which pleases Mr. Flowett better than to keep a testy old country

squire, who is distraught with rumours of horrible bribery petitions levied against him, on the tenter-hooks of expectation. *Quorum pars magna fui* is Mr. Flowett's mental ejaculation whenever he reviews the political history of the past few years. You cannot mention a contested election to Mr. Flowett but he was really at the bottom of it, or presided at in the capacity of the deity of war holding the scales of victory. Many as are the political celebrities which resort to the Carlton, there is none more influential than the great Mr. Flowett. If it is required to save a cabinet or to pass a bill through the House Mr. Flowett is emphatically the man.

So much for one or two sides of life at the Carlton Club; so much for one or two casual glimpses of a few of its most typical frequenters. We shall complete the picture when by way of contrast we hold up to view as much as we discreetly may of a kindred association, and a namesake too, the Junior Carlton, in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE JUNIOR CARLTON.

Relation of Junior Carlton to Carlton—Its functions and its character—Sucking M.P.'s at the Junior Carlton—Messrs. Positive Quirk, Quibble, and Co.—Their demeanour, dress, and existence—Captain Fitz Foodle and the Hon. Percy Deuceace—Major Fuddleton—His journalistic ambitions—The dinner, and *Sunrise Review* Episode—*The Planet* metamorphosis—Major Fuddleton and Mr. Flowett—The catastrophe—*Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?*—Fitz-Jugge the Australian—The Smoking-room at the Carlton—Social influence of tobacco in general—The talk—Monotone Mumble, the Club Bore.

THOUGH the Junior Carlton is, to a certain extent, undeniably, the offshoot and descendant of the illustrious institution at which we have just glanced, it is by no means to be supposed that it is merely a junior reproduction or an inferior imitation of the elder and eponymous club. The Junior Carlton possesses indeed a variety of strongly defined features of its own—features for which it cannot be accounted indebted to any family likeness handed down by the senior establishment. What the original Carlton is to the members of the elder generation, that it may be said the Junior Carlton is to the members of the new. But in precisely the same way as young England—we use the phrase without at-

taching to it any special political significance—is very far from being a servile copy of old ; so, too, the Junior Carlton has struck out a line more or less of its own. In fact if the Junior Carlton may be regarded as the progeny of the original Carlton, it may, in no unimportant respects, be regarded also as its rival. The Carlton will of course retain its ancient *prestige* so long as party government continues a fact ; but much of the popularity which a few years ago was centred in this establishment has, it is undeniable, been transferred to the junior institution, which, as it is its namesake, is now, in virtue of the most recent architectural improvements, nearly its *vis-à-vis* as well.

Ever since it was first ushered into birth the career of the Junior Carlton has been one of uninterrupted triumph and success. Destiny smiled upon its origin, and prosperity has not ceased to hover over its progress. The Junior Carlton came into existence precisely at the moment at which it was needed ; it may, in fact, be said to have commenced the movement in favour of the creation of that mass of new clubs, whose rise is so strongly pronounced a characteristic in the social history of the metropolis during the last few years. It was obviously an advantage for it that it should grow up beneath the tutelary shadow of the more venerable institution. Assuming the old, time-honoured name, the Junior Carlton found that a kind of ready-made reputation already awaited it, just as the less brilliant sons

of justly renowned fathers are fortunate enough to be spared the necessity of achieving by the splendour of any exploits of their own the initial steps towards notoriety and distinction. Unlike, however, most examples which we have recently had of the ambitious descendants of illustrious progenitors, the Junior Carlton has constantly shown itself worthy of its high ancestral connection. From the first the Junior Carlton has been a good club; it has been uniformly well managed, it has exercised a careful discrimination in the selection of its members, and has not failed rigorously to study their comfort.

We have said that the Junior Carlton made its appearance at an opportune and seasonable moment; and so indeed it did. The sentiment was fast ripening into conviction that the constitution of the original Carlton was too contracted in its essence and too limited in its nature; it was even whispered that there was a portentous ponderosity in its atmosphere; that the smoking-room was a trifle too uniformly dull, and that the monotony of the morning-room was gradually acquiring a tinge of sombreness. And the lack of variety in its members prevents the Carlton, and will ever prevent it, from being a place fraught with any great amount of pleasurable excitement to the casual loungeur. Country gentlemen and steady-going political stagers of a certain age certainly impart an air of dignity and respectability to an institution, but they fail to invest it with any attractions of pre-eminent liveliness; and in the morning-room of the Carlton you

will find the bulk of the inmates composed of these orders. Above all, it was beginning to be felt that if it was desired to represent in a club the young, nascent, and vigorous conservatism of the day, an organization somewhat more comprehensive and elastic than that of the Carlton founded in 1832 was requisite. It was known that there were vast numbers of gentlemen of all ages desirous of enrolling themselves as members of a club whose basis should be the profession of the political creed in which they believed ; in other words, it was apparent that a demand existed for a new Conservative club. The doors of the Carlton were practically closed against new comers ; the same might be said of the Conservative itself ; there was nothing for it but to found a Junior Carlton, and founded the Junior Carlton accordingly was.

The assistance which the Junior Carlton Club has given to the English Conservatives is no mere fiction ; it has been an extremely effective instrument of political proselytism. There is no surer guarantee of the increase of power than the display of strength. The successful organization of the Junior Carlton showed the popularity of Conservative principles ; their popularity being demonstrated, has been also enhanced. In this way the Junior Carlton has performed a mission which was beyond the reach of the original Carlton. Exclusiveness being the pre-eminent characteristic of the latter institution, what it has done since its first establishment has been rather to

deepen, than to extend, the roots and fibres of constitutional tenets. Rigidly, for the most part, closing its doors against all save those who belonged to a certain class or section of society, it has done little or nothing towards widening the surface of conservative influence; it has introduced no new orders within its pale; it has been friendly to a policy of vertical rather than of lateral extension. Now in the case of the Junior Carlton all this has been reversed. It is true that amongst its members are to be found as ample an allowance of titled aristocrats and of landed gentry as could be wished; but there are to be found also the representatives of interests which are conspicuous principally by their absence, in the organization of the institution which we have endeavoured to portray in the foregoing chapter. Young barristers, civil servants, army and navy men, journalists, and men about town of every order and degree, swell the lists of the Junior Carlton. The scene presented by its morning-room or smoking-room is very different indeed from that presented by the apartments of its elder namesake over the way; it is more diversified, it is livelier, it is free from that air of constraint which is to be felt within the precincts of the old original Carlton; consequently it is not to be wondered at if it has won over to itself a considerable number of those who in former times used to be the exclusive and constant *habités* of its neighbour. Not indeed that they have renounced their allegiance to the older Carlton; their names still remain

on its books, and they continue to enter in their periodical appearances. But for all that it is manifest that the junior association has now taken the *première* place in their club affections. They will tell you that it is more amusing; that if you want gossip you can get it better and fresher than over the way; that if you want miscellaneous chit-chat, from the last new philosophical theory down to the last Parisian scandal, you will find that too; that matters have not yet begun at the Junior Carlton to drift so completely into a stereotyped groove; that, in a word, it answers their purpose better than the more venerable and patriarchal institution.

It must not be understood from the tenour of these remarks that the party-spirit of the Junior Carlton is at all less keen than that of its older rival. Quite the reverse: it is, if anything, more so. If you wish to hear political prospects zealously canvassed from an orthodox point of view, there is no place to which you can more profitably or successfully repair than to the smoking-room of the Junior Carlton; and the security for the implicit acceptance of sound constitutional tenets required of all members at their entrance is more severe and searching than any test of this description, which has hitherto been inaugurated. The impetuosity and enthusiasm of growth discernible in the case of the individual are, in this instance, not less markedly displayed in the case of the corporation. The moderate constitutionalism of the Carlton becomes the hot toryism of the Junior Carlton;

the distrust of Mr. Gladstone prevalent at the former, becomes the burning hatred and broadcast denunciation of the latter. The members of the Junior Carlton are in fact as staunch partisans as you could desire to meet. They rather enlarge upon and exaggerate than tone down or subdue any of the angularities of sentiment entertained by the members of the Carlton founded in 1832. Finally, in addition to all these qualities peculiar to the constitution of the Junior Carlton, it boasts of a strangers' dining-room—an institution which increases its popularity with the outside world, and is calculated admirably to promote the convenience and the comfort of its members.

Let us proceed to an illustration of certain of the social idiosyncrasies of the Junior Carlton, by reference to particular and concrete cases.

The facilities which the accomplished Mr. Flowett finds for the discovery of eligible objects of Parliamentary advancement in the Carlton Club have been already mentioned; but these sink into insignificance when compared with those that are offered by the Junior Carlton. The Junior Carlton is, indeed, a perfect hot-bed of gentlemen politically disposed, who have arrived at a certain stage of their existence, at which they may with propriety, if not with elegance, be termed "sucking M.P.'s." You cannot enter the club without encountering several groups of them in succession. In truth, no person could form any accurate idea of the extent to which Parliamentary ambition prevails in this country, unless he

were to take the social phenomena to be met with at the Junior Carlton into his consideration. These gentlemen, as a genus, admit of several divisions into distinct species or classes. Their ages vary, but, roughly speaking, they may be said to range from seven-and-twenty to seven-and-forty. Political ambition in this material age of ours is seldom, save in the pages of semi-sentimental novels, found to be developed with any degree of strength during the first quarter of a century of human existence ; as seldom will it be discovered to remain when the victim is once fairly embarked upon the fifties. Nor is the reason far to seek. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, senatorial cravings are the expression of a desire for individual distinction, the ebullition of a healthy and legitimate ambition, or the result of a thirst for social notoriety and prestige. If they are the former, they have not time to gain that degree of maturity which may entitle them to distinction before the minimum limit of age has been reached ; if they belong to the latter order, they will scarcely survive the completion of a man's first half-century of existence. By that period, in the majority of cases, the passion for the social elevation which is accompanied by any severe trouble or exertion is generally extinct : a stage of optimism has set in ; human nature commences to be philosophical, and to argue that the state of things which has suited it so long may suit it a little longer.

But during the twenty years that we have specified, the

passion for Parliament reigns in all its uncontrolled activity; and the Junior Carlton, as we have said, numbers amongst its members a small nest of those who live for nothing else save the realization of this aim. You may see them here of all kinds—from the dashing young spend-thrift, to whom the principal attraction of a seat in Parliament is that it will prove a sacred and inviolable refuge from the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune in the shape of the menaces of intolerant or tolerant creditors, down to the well-to-do citizen of five-and-forty, who is driven to attempt to scale the walls of St. Stephen's, by the stimulating admonitions of his better half, that it will be a capital thing for her and for the girls; or to the priggish young doctrinaire, who believes he has got hold of a theory of representative government which will invigorate a corrupt senate or gladden the spirit of his desponding country.

To this latter order of embryo statesmen does young Positive Quirk belong. Of course Quirk is constitutional to the backbone; the mere fact of his being a member of the Junior Carlton is sufficient guarantee of that. But then Quirk believes that there are Conservatives and Conservatives. As for himself, he belongs of course to the *élite* of his party, to the salt of the earth. From the habitual study of Mr. Disraeli's novels, interspersed with occasional dips into the philosophical writings of Mr. Mill, De Tocqueville, and a few other theorists, Quirk has imbibed a system of philosophical thought, the result of

which is to make him allege that, though the nation is undeniably conservative, in the true and proper sense of that somewhat ambiguous term, very few people living know how the conservative sentiment is to be elicited. Young Positive Quirk belongs to a small *clique* composed of *habitués* of the Junior Carlton, who occasionally dine together, discuss grave matters in a doxosophistical manner, arrive at great conclusions by a very simple process which ministers an incredible amount of salve to their own inordinate vanity ; finally arrange that there is nothing for any of them but a Parliamentary career, and wind up by thinking themselves, to adopt one of Mr. Disraeli's felicities, a political party. The spirits of Quirk and his friends pant for Westminster; the confabulations which they hold nightly, in a monotonous undertone, may be all very well in their way—excellent in the light of preliminary exercitations, but after all St. Stephen's is the only true thing. The assiduity of these gentlemen is something marvellous. As for election intelligence, they know it by heart. No sooner do they hear of a vacancy, potential or actual, in borough or county, than they hurry down to see Mr. Flowett; not of course in a body, they hate each other in reality far too cordially for that. It is true they confide their views to each other; but just as it is the object of Quirk to steal a march on Quibble, so it is the wish dearest to Quibble's heart fairly to distance Quirk. Mr. Flowett, it must be confessed, does not receive these energetic aspirations with the

enthusiasm that might be expected ; for like a great many others, Mr. Flowett is apt to doubt, on principle, the real working value of the pseudo-philosophical conservatism of the self-styled and self-fancied rising young man.

Messrs. Quirk, Quibble, and their friends are easily to be recognized. In their very costumes there is apparent a careful and discriminating eye to Parliamentary effect. As a rule, during the months of summer these gentlemen patronize white hats : a white hat is supposed to be indicative of a cabinet minister. They prefer blue frock-coats to black, because it is supposed by them that there is in the former hue some mystical symbolism of political success, and for a similar occult reason you may always observe that their necktie is of a dark azure or of a spotless black. If you meet Quirk in Pall Mall you may notice that his step is studiously hurried, and his air artistically preoccupied. Stop him, and he will evince a demonstratively restless desire to be off. Question him as to his destination, and with an expression of supreme consciousness of importance he will elevate his gold-headed cane—gold-headed canes are invariably employed by coming Chancellors of the Exchequer and are most official in character—in the direction of Westminster, and will perhaps vouchsafe to you the enigmatical intelligence that this confounded business down there keeps him perpetually on the move : the real truth probably being if Quirk happens to have “business” in the neighbourhood of Westminster at all, that it is at his bankers in Parliament Street, from whom

he has just received a caution that his account is already considerably overdrawn. Our friends Quibble, Quirk, *et hoc genus omne*, are in fact always rehearsing a part. Between each other they have a profound conviction that they are all of them superlative humbugs ; but this very conviction it is which keeps them together, and creates amongst them a wholesome and constraining sentiment of mutual contempt.

Inside the club the illustrious personages composing this select *coterie* are readily discernible at a glance. Quirk is fond of lounging on a morocco-covered couch, in an attitude which he once saw indulged in by an ex-prime minister. Quibble, when he sits, invariably projects his legs in front of him, at the utmost tether of his extension, thrusts his hat most inconveniently far down over his forehead, and pretends to ignore in the sublimest manner the existence of an outside world. Quibble experiences no great comfort from this position ; it is neither easy nor elegant ; but he believes it to be a favourite one with Mr. Disraeli in the House of Commons, and adopts it accordingly. If you happen to want the last number of the 'Quarterly,' you are certain to find that it is pre-occupied by one of the clique, who is deep in the study of a technical article on *Electoral Returns*. If you hear behind you two voices discussing in an ostentatious whisper the chances of So-and-So's getting unseated for such a place, you may be sure that some of the Quirk and Quibble company are near. If you venture to interrogate any of

them with whom you may have the honour of a personal acquaintance, as to the chances of such and such an election, or the prospects of the ministry, or the probable strength of the opposition, you will get a reply couched in singularly diplomatic and circuitous language, which, at first sight seeming to mean much, you find on reflection conveys to you nothing, and with which a profusion of Burleigh nods of the most approved description is lavished. Quirk and Quibble are also very great indeed on all forms of Parliamentary orders. Their command of technical phraseology in this respect is overwhelming. It is stated, and stated upon altogether unexceptionable authority, that the proudest moment in Quirk's life was when he received an invitation to Viscountess Beaconsfield's inaugural assembly the summer before last at the new foreign office.

These are fair specimens of the most systematic seekers after senatorial honours which the Junior Carlton contains, but they are far from being the only ones. Messrs. Quirk, Quibble, and their comrades belong, as we have said, to the order of professedly intellectual and philosophical Conservatives. There are other gentlemen whom you may meet in plenty at this their favourite haunt, who are expecting indeed speedily to be summoned to the honours of their national legislature, but who await the distinction with an air of langour and a total absence of anything like enthusiasm. To such personages as Captain Fitz Foodle or the Hon. Percy Deuceace, Parliament

simply means a legitimate extension of the club life which already they enjoy—a convenient kind of rendezvous for meeting their friends. Divisions they regard as rather a bore, and committees as unmitigated nuisances. On the whole, however, they are disposed to think it is the correct thing to be in the House. Every one is there, they will tell you, now-a-days; and after all, the life possesses the undeniable recommendation of never leaving you entirely without something to do. Political disquisition of an off-hand character of an “across the walnuts and the wine” description suits them. They have picked up the slang official tone, and they will none of them feel quite satisfied till they are able to ventilate their jargon of Parliamentary phraseology in the House.

Major Fuddleton, on the other hand, a most regular *habitué* of the Junior Carlton, is not less passionately bent upon the achievement of a seat at St. Stephen’s than Quibble or Quirk; but it would be out of the question to rank him under the class to which these gentlemen belong. In age, the worthy Major may be about fifty, but he has long renounced the active service of a military life; not so his wish to continue his public attentions to his country. Possessed of a moderate fortune, Major Fuddleton has, during the last fourteen years, been a ready victim to any election agents who may have been disposed to sport with him in their clutches, to say nothing of a variety of adventurers of other kinds. On two occasions has he contrived to fall in with a select gang of newspaper speculators, who

so worked upon his plastic nature as to succeed in persuading him that the sure, and in fact the only, passport to Parliamentary success was to have a journal at his disposal. What would it cost? Well, a few thousands—say seven—might start a morning daily. The Major would think it over. Mr. Flowett's advice was asked; and as Mr. Flowett has a very proper scepticism on the subject of any new journalistic ventures, the great conservative agent endeavoured decidedly to dissuade his client from any such chimerical speculation. But it was to no purpose. The Major now suffered his lively imagination to become dazzled with a vision of the triumphal future which awaited the newspaper proprietor. A seat in Parliament would of course follow as a necessary and immediate result. But this would only be the beginning of good things. Was not the press in these days, when every one read the great moulder of public opinion, more potent than the policy of ministers or the eloquence of statesmen? Thus reasoned Major Fuddleton with himself, and at every step in his high argument his ambition increased. At first he had limited his aspirations to a borough or a county; but as the proprietor of a newspaper he would require more. He would not rest content till he had acquired a seat in the cabinet.

Yes, Major Fuddleton would have a paper. The seven thousand pounds should be forthcoming immediately—intelligence whereat the trio of literary speculators who had succeeded in netting their prey rejoiced proportionately.

Would these gentlemen come and dine with Major Fuddleton at the Junior Carlton, say the day after tomorrow? Will a weasel suck a rabbit? as the bard of Bon Gualtier inquires. Of course these gentlemen would come; and, as Major Fuddleton had reason subsequently to discover, when they intended dining they dined, and as for Romanée Conti, they clearly entertained the same opinion of that *recherché* vintage which Mr. Richard Swiveller did of the plebeian fluid called beer, that its taste could not be known unless it was drunk in considerable quantities. In short, the Major had to pay a dinner bill that evening on whose magnitude he had little counted: "but then, you know," he reasoned by way of solace with himself, "these literary men are all alike, and drink like fishes."

However it was all arranged, and within a few weeks after the above-mentioned date, the *Sunrise Review*—"devilish good idea that name," had been the comment of the Major when his three intelligent literary friends first suggested to him the title—duly came out. Everybody informed the Major that his paper was admirable. "Gad, sir! I can tell you it's an expensive luxury!" was a favourite and a perfectly just remark of the proud proprietor. Expensive of course it was, responded his friends, who professed to be knowing in such matters, but then Major Fuddleton must remember that when it once did begin to pay, it would recoup him for all his expenditure in a very short space of time. Perhaps so: the only un-

fortunate thing in this instance was that this blissful period never actually arrived. After a space of one month, during which Major Fuddleton had had occasion to entertain the three literary gentlemen, who had kindly volunteered to start his newspaper for him, at quite a series of elaborate little banquets in the strangers' room at the Junior Carlton, it was unanimously agreed by the four that the success with which the Major's speculation had met was not so considerable as to render the continuation of the *Sunrise Review* in a daily shape advisable.

"Deuced rum," said the Major, "that the *Sunrise* isn't popular. All my friends tell me it's so well written."

So thought the three literary gentlemen; but then they explained that in the long run the genius which was expended upon the journal must inevitably tell; that its tardiness of success—there was a delicacy in this phrase which vastly tickled the Major—was wholly and solely due to the vagueness of popular perception; that, though they were perfectly ready—of course they were perfectly ready, for these plausible scribes took uncommonly good care that their salaries, by no means bad ones, should be paid with great weekly punctuality—to prolong their co-operations with the Major, they should on the whole advise that the daily *Sunrise Review* should be converted into a weekly journal, called, say, the *Planet*. The advantages of such a plan, continued the trio, were obvious. What had hitherto militated against the more

extensive circulation of the *Sunrise* had been the frothy inanities common in the daily morning press, which had so corrupted and debauched the popular taste as to render it incapable of appreciating a really sound and philosophical periodical such as that which the Major, the trio might say, was fortunate enough—the Major smiled grimly—fortunate enough (the words were repeated with emphasis) to possess. Now, if the daily *Sunrise* became the weekly *Planet*, precisely the kind of public—a public of educated readers—to which the Major appealed would be gained. The truth was that in this age there was a growing tendency on the part of persons of intellect and education to discard altogether the daily press, and to devote their attention wholly to the thoughtful and well-weighed articles of weekly newspapers. There thus was a public ready made for the *Planet* at once; and thus the influential position which the *Sunrise* had—in spite of the perhaps questionable nature of the success of the speculation—when looked at from a purely financial point of view—most undeniably taken up, would be practically retained, while the expenses of its production—no unimportant item, as the trio thought, an expression of opinion with which the gallant Major entirely and unreservedly agreed—would be materially decreased.

This reasoning appeared indisputably sound; and within a week's time it was announced that the *Sunrise Review* had become incorporated with the *Planet*, which would in future appear every Saturday. Oddly

enough, however, the progress of the *Planet* in its course towards a solvent prosperity, was as dilatory as that of the *Sunrise Review*; still the patience of the Major was not yet exhausted, and he would wait a little longer. Meanwhile, events occurred which induced him to think that his dream of the extensive influence enjoyed by the newspaper proprietor partook of the nature of a delusion. He did not receive the amount of court that he had anticipated from statesmen in a high official position. Vacancies occurred in constituencies, and still there was no invitation to Major Fuddleton that he would allow himself to be proposed as a candidate. Finally came the general election; and when Major Fuddleton walked down one fine morning to Guelph Street and began to interrogate Mr. Flowett as to a seat, the Major was infinitely disgusted by receiving a reply that nothing could be done for him unless he was prepared to lay down in the first place a sum of two thousand pounds. Were the services which he—Major Fuddleton—had rendered to the great conservative party to go for nothing? Was it to be accounted an insignificant trifle that he had expended a sum of over ten thousand pounds on starting the *Sunrise Review*, which had most unquestionably advanced the prestige and popularity of the party in a very considerable degree throughout the country? and that he was at the present time the sole proprietor of the recognized weekly organ of the Constitutionalists—an organ, let me tell you, sir, which plays me a pretty tune

of costs—enterprises, on both of which he had embarked, inspired by no other motives than those of a patriotic partizanship.

Now Mr. Flowett can be blunt enough and plain-spoken enough on occasions, as well as unctuous and adulatory. That day his time happened to be unusually precious. He listened to the pleas and arguments of Major Fuddleton, but no sooner had the gallant gentleman fairly stopped to draw breath than Mr. Flowett put in:—

“You’re a very excellent gentleman, Major Fuddleton; but as for your papers, we don’t care that for them.” Here Mr. Flowett pronounced the monosyllable “we” in a manner of extreme importance, and immediately afterwards flipped his fingers with a most contemptuous smack. “I seldom saw the *Sunrise Review*,” continued Mr. Flowett. “I have never seen the *Planet*; I never wish to see either of them. We have the ‘Flag’ and ‘Ensign,’ and we don’t want any more help from the cursed press, which generally blunders. The only thing that surprises me, Major Fuddleton, is that a sensible man, like you, should have allowed yourself to be so infernally gulled by a set of atrocious thieves like the literary gentlemen who are always trying to start papers. I know them of old. Good-morning, Major. Very busy now; shall be at the Junior at five this afternoon; we will talk further of things then.”

And Mr. Flowett bowed, or, more strictly speaking, nodded the astonished Major out of his presence. But

the Major, though infinitely irate, did not fail to inscribe the words of the astute, if somewhat discourteous, Mr. Flowett upon the mindful tablets of his heart. It was Friday now; the *Planet* for to-morrow was as good as out 'already; of course therefore there was no help for it this week. But the Major firmly determined that he would expend no more of his sovereigns on the three intelligent literary gentlemen. "Devilish clever fellows, these newspaper fellows are, and devilish amusing, too," he had once remarked in the fulness of his heart to a club friend, who had assisted him in organizing the *Sunrise Review* and the *Planet*. The Major was as good as his word. The trio received no more cheques and no more snug little dinners at the Carlton. They are now prowling about for new victims, and it is reported have almost succeeded in fairly fastening their fangs upon a young and very opulent baronet of old-fashioned Whig opinions; for it is a pure matter of indifference to these Tapers and Tadpoles of journalism what is the political creed which they profess. As for the Major, he even yet growls at that period of his life when he got implicated in the meshes of these scheming scribes; and he has now entirely transferred himself—no unprofitable harvest—to the tricks and intrigues of Mr. Flowett's local agents throughout the country. His name habitually appears in connection with boroughs and counties whenever a vacancy in their representation occurs. There was a rumour last autumn that he was coming in for the Orkneys. He was next

heard of as aspiring to the hand of some constituency in the neighbourhood of the Land's End ; and there are profane young men at the Junior Carlton who are ready to bet you that before he dies Fuddleton will have entered an appearance at every borough in England, and to suggest that when he dies there should be inscribed upon his tombstone, as a neat and appropriate epitaph, the line in which the hero of the *Æneid* apostrophizes himself and his followers :—

“ *Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris ?* ”

Fitz Jugge is another tolerably regular loungee at the Junior Carlton, who regards St. Stephen's as the inevitable bourne and destination of his existence, while he does not contemplate the prospect with any very keen feelings of pleasure. Indeed, had he had only his own wishes to consult, it is exceedingly improbable that he would ever have been a Junior Carlton man at all. Fitz Jugge has spent an active existence in colonial industry ; he hails from some Australian settlement. He went out there at fourteen, and began to rise like a rocket from the very moment in which he first set foot on the foreign soil. He has now returned, tolerably full of years—he is well on for sixty—and surcharged with money, to the land of his nativity ; but he has brought with him a restlessly intriguing wife and a couple of desperately ambitious daughters. Our friend's real patronymic is Jugg ; but his partner, backed by a liberally feed

inquirer into genealogical documents, resident in Coles Buildings, Temple, has discovered by some old papers which have been brought to light that the proper family name is Fitz-Jugge. As Fitz-Jugge, then, our friend the colonial magnate has been, under domestic pressure, duly elected a member of the Junior Carlton, and Mrs. Fitz-Jugge spends a considerable portion of each day in meditating as to the best way in which she may be able to affix the magic letters M.P., which will prove, she believes, a never-failing social passport, to her husband's name. If Jugg—we beg his pardon, Fitz Jugge—were allowed to carry out his own wishes, he would infinitely prefer to remain quietly at home. He is totally devoid of political ambition, and has a decided craving for tranquil domestic bliss. But Mrs. Fitz Jugge is not only his better, but also his bigger half; for Fitz Jugge is a small man with a small voice, and Mrs. F. J. is a large woman, who speaks in a tone of aggressive authority. Fitz Jugge is told that he must haunt the Junior Carlton—a very distinguished and aristocratic club, she never fails to impress upon him—for the purpose of keeping himself before the public. Meanwhile the good lady herself maintains vigorous diplomatic communications with sundry gentlemen of the Flowett type, who, she judges, may be able effectually to abet her efforts in her great Parliamentary campaign. Fitz Jugge submits in the spirit of a martyr,—what else can he do, poor man?—thinks not unseldom, and with a regretful longing, of his erewhile quiet antipodean

seclusion, and feels that he is being offered up as a victim, upon the altar dedicated to the sacred purpose of the worldly advancement of his household.

Let us shift the scene: let us quit Quirk and Quibble, with their philosophic conviction of great ends to be accomplished and high destinies to be fulfilled; let us bid a temporary farewell to the young and middle-aged exquisites of the Junior Carlton, who regard that establishment as the entry vestibule to the great Parliamentary club held at St. Stephen's; to Major Fuddleton, credulous and enthusiastic prey of eager adventurers; to Fitz Jugge, driven almost to the verge of distraction by the remorseless energies of his wife; and introduce the reader to the smoking-room at this highly popular and not a little fashionable club. We will see it, if you please, at one of its most popular hours—say any time between ten P.M. and one A.M. during the Parliamentary session. The Junior Carlton is pre-eminently a dining club, and the apartment dedicated to the consumption of nicotine, coffee, and brandy and sodawater is full to overflowing. Every now and then a straggler from the House drops in, lounges the full length of the chamber—the smoking-room of the Junior Carlton is one of the most spacious and best ventilated in London—nods to this fumigator, shakes hands with that, and finally sinks down, overcome with his exertions in the cause of courtesy, on a couch already partially preoccupied by a select few of his friends, with whom he has previously made an assignation.

What a Babel of conversation, what an incessant flow of small talk, what an infinity of scandal, what a sedulous outpouring of entertaining nothings that have been locked up in the breasts of the respective chatterers during the severer hours of the day! No one who has not done several good and toilsome strokes of work ere darkness has covered the face of the earth, who has not the pleasing retrospect of efforts conscientiously made and successfully completed, can enjoy the delights of a club smoking-room at this witching hour, can relish to the full the exquisite abandon which now reigns supreme. Some crusty old poet has told us of "the smoker's silent and most moody puffs." Clearly he had an inveterate prejudice against the delights of tobacco—possibly he could never get through a cigar without experiencing a series of disagreeable and turbulent emotions in the region of his stomach—or he would never have written thus. Tobacco the engenderer of a moody silence! Nay, rather it is the provocative of the most entertaining small talk to which men ever listen. Even those who are taciturn on other occasions gush forth into utterance then. A cigar is the safe and blessed antidote of conversational timidity. It agreeably fills up pauses, glosses over hiatus, supplies grammatical lapses. The man of a limited vocabulary—who, from a conviction that he cannot find words adequately to express his ideas on ordinary occasions, infrequently trusts himself to open his mouth—discovers now that the period has arrived when he may safely unburthen

himself of the ideas of which he has been in labour. A hitch occurs: at other times he would be nervous, would turn pale, and finally collapse in the silence of despair. Not so now. A volume of smoke artistically exhaled from between the lips supplies the place of the desired epithet, and a gentle wave of the well-beloved cigar acts as an admirable substitute for the vainly sought epigram, or the idly attempted repartee. There is nothing which disarms criticism like the presence of a pipe. Aposiopeses, anacolutha—these are pardoned, are ignored, or are not noticed at all, when the company is in the presence of the great goddess of smoke. It is in smoking that humanity finds its common level. It is the cigar which adds confidence to the shy, and smoothes down the angularities of the bumptious. In the face of these great and indisputable facts, why, O why, should Mr. Du Maurier, as on one or two occasions he has recently done, so far discredit the Indian weed as to represent her in dismally tragic guise—a siren, beautiful indeed, but gradually sucking from the bodies of her worshippers their brains, their virtues, and their strength?

However, Mr. Du Maurier might continue his anti-tobacco cartoons for ever in 'Punch' for any effect that they would have upon the denizens of the chamber in which we now are. The smoking-room at the Junior Carlton would not consent on these terms to be degraded into a nullity. That young gentleman whom you see yonder elegantly puffing the most *recherché* of cigarettes,

and drinking nothing more potent than *eau sucrée*, is the Hon. Augustus Altamount, of Her Majesty's Embassy at Paris. Since he has commenced his continental career he has acquired the art of looking on everything English with feelings of supreme disdain. What is there in London that you cannot get a hundred times easier and better in Paris? Wines? Balls? Society? Pooh!—everything! He has merely come over now because, as he thoughtfully says, “it won't do for him to drop all his London acquaintance.” He has been a member of the Junior Carlton from the first, and that is the reason he is here to-night, regaling his listeners—fit though few—with all the very latest Parisian scandal extant. Pass a little farther on, and you will see a knot of three. Political characters? By no means. Of course they are Conservatives, else they would not be here; but their Conservatism extends no farther than a religious conviction that “the cad on every occasion must be promptly suppressed.” They are, in fact, three of the youngest though not the least distinguished members of the Gun Club, and at this present moment they are engaged in making up their respective books, *à propos* of a handicap, which is to be shot off to-morrow.

But if we were to endeavour to give an abstract of the themes discussed to-night, we should have to ransack the storehouse of conversational topics in heaven and earth. This is the kind of Babel sounds which you may overhear:

"Eloped, by Gad! What, the little girl who used to drive the bays?—Of course there's a split: I have it direct from Downing Street: Gladstone never——. What, poetical drama at the Lyceum—absurd! There's no such thing as originality on the English stage: give me Vienna—Curious move, this: why should he scratch Hybiscus?—You remember Delancy, at Christ Church? Well, he's up for —— If I had a stable I'd never run anything under a three-year old—Depend upon it, grape and canister is the best receipt for a noisy mob—The principles of conservatism are coeval—Decent table enough, but the top middle pocket draws like —— Never believed he could ride—So Cecil still keeps his candles burning—Try this cigar: I get them from —— White-chapel! What on earth is he doing there?—A very neat ankle, and a very pretty girl—Good heavens! There's Monotone Mumble."

And Monotone Mumble it is—the greatest bore ever known at the Junior Carlton. His entrance to a room is the signal for dismay; his approach towards a group of talkers is practically the word of command for its instant dispersion. Yet Monotone Mumble is a man who means excellently well. He has nothing to do—no profession to follow, and no special interests to engross his mind. His prime object in life is to make himself agreeable to his fellow-creatures; and the sole cause for which he fails to accomplish this end is that he has an awkward habit of being invariably in the way precisely when and

where he is not wanted. There is an air of painful sameness about his remarks, and his expression is lit up by a sempiternal and stereotyped glow of benignity. As his friends—active foes he has none—happily express themselves, “Somehow or other you get tired of Monotone Mumble’s face.”

Up till an hour after midnight the tide of life goes on increasing in fullness and intensity in the smoking-room of the Junior Carlton. Dawdlers drop in from evening parties, stay a minute or two, and are then whisked off in hansom or cabriolet to some other dazzling hall of light. Private secretaries of Ministers—looking unutterable things, and talking in a tone of ostentatious secrecy which might make you think that the fate of Europe or the world depended upon their confabulations—stream in and out. Meanwhile it is getting late, some one remarks. The last cigar is ignited, and homewards the members of the Junior Carlton—some of them clubwards again, for so many of these institutions are there in London that it would be possible to extend the circle of club life without pause or interruption during the twenty-four hours, wend their by no means weary way. Acting upon the hint, we too will bid adieu to the Junior Carlton and its many-sided life for the present.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REFORM.

Clubs essentially aristocratic institutions, and have prospered more among Tories than Whigs — The Hon. Laurence Fitz Patrick — His view of the Reform — Mixed character of the Club — Tobias Cruppina, Esq., and Mr. Flippet — Mr. Desborough Ranger — Mr. Bolter Helluo at dinner — Mr. Nugans Hahah — Breakfast at the Reform — Social position of the meal generally — The Club on Parliamentary nights — The Smoking-room — Mr. Bonde — Mr. Scattercash Goosequill.

POLITICAL club life, it must be confessed by all candid sociologists, has at all times taken a very much deeper root amongst the representatives of the Conservative party than amongst their opponents in the conduct of the state. There are certain reasons which will naturally explain this phenomenon. It will, indeed, be found, upon an impartial survey of historical facts, that at all times and amongst all nations club life has been the prescriptive heirloom and possession of the aristocratic body in the community, by whatever name it has been called. Scholars may indeed question how far it is true that political parties in our sense of the word existed at Athens previous to the era of the orators. We, whose business it by no means is to insist upon such a scrupulous degree of accu-

racy and refinement, may fairly say that during the lifetime of the great statesman Pericles, and throughout the whole of the Peloponnesian war, the prototypes of our modern political factions and coteries were undeniably to be found. There was the party of innovation, and there was the party which made it its aim to stand *super antiquas vias* : there was the party of the aristocrat, and the party of the demagogue ; there were those who denounced the existence of all social privileges, and were clamorous in favour of creating a dead level of political equality ; and there were those who took as their motto what, in the slang phrase of the founders of the 'Pall Mall Gazette,' is denominated "blood and culture." To the members and the champions of the aristocratic section of Athenian politicians, the Greek club, to which in a previous chapter we have alluded at some little length, rendered infinite service. It is not attempted to be denied by the most subversive of recent historians that Cleon, who may be regarded much as the John Bright of Athenian politics, the leader of a new school of social ideas and social thought, was principally kept down, so long as he was kept down, by the agency of the *hetaireiai* ; or that Nicias, probably the most incompetent being who ever attempted to lead a party of attack or fulfil the functions of admiral of a fleet, contrived to retain the influence which, in spite of all his shortcomings, he still, almost to the last, possessed, by the instrumentality of the same societies. It may be said that the early club history of

our own country refutes this view of the question, and meets the proposition which we have made with a practical contradiction. It will be urged by the antiquarian that the oldest established of London clubs were Liberal in ideas.

It must be remembered that such clubs as Brooks's, though their members in the first instance belonged to the so-called popular party in the country, have always been eminently aristocratic institutions. They were the local habitations of Whiggism; and the English Whig is but another name for the English oligarch. The race is almost extinguished now. Liberalism is a fact: Radicalism is a fact: Whiggism, however, is only a phrase. So long as it had any meaning or vitality at all, it merely signified an exclusive body of high-born and stiff-necked politicians, who endeavoured to accommodate the monarchical government of England to the model of the Venetian constitution, whose ambition it was to degenerate the sovereign to the position of a doge, fenced round on every side with a virtually omnipotent council of ten. It was beneath the auspices of such men as these that the illustrious association, into which "fighting Fitzgerald" bullied his way, sprang up. In such organizations what essential elements of popular sympathy are there to be found? In what way can they be said to militate against the proposition which we have laid down, that the club ventures of the Liberals have not been as successful as those of their political antagonists? If it is really

required to see how far Radical clubbism has been able to preserve the original unity of its design, how far it is an actively operative power, we must look not at the aristocratic Brooks's, but elsewhere ; we must turn our steps from St. James's Street towards the left hand, and entering Pall Mall must land ourselves at the only club which at all can be considered a representative Radical institution, the Reform.

Every one knows the Hon. Laurence Fitz Patrick. How he ever managed to achieve his election for the Irish borough that he represents is a mystery even to his most intimate friends. Of course he is a Liberal—Liberal to the backbone ; but that sort of thing pays well in Kerry. Ask him his opinion of the Reform. Why does he belong there ? Why does he go there so often ? Does he like the members ? Does he believe in its influence ? “ My dear fellow,” he will candidly inform you, “ if you ask me in confidence why I keep my name on the books of this place I will tell you. My reasons are mainly two. In the first place, as clubs go, it is an exceedingly comfortable crib. The rooms are cosy. The smoking room is well ventilated. The whist just suits me. The dinners are capitally cooked. We have fewer of those restrictions in the matter of strangers than obtain elsewhere, and, after repeated trials, I find I can always depend on the wine. In the second place, there is no place in London where I have so many opportunities for doing the bills I require as here. They call us a political club. My own private

opinion is that we are nothing of the sort. Two-thirds of the members don't care that——" and Mr. Laurence Fitz Patrick fillips his finger in a most eloquent and expressive manner—"whether the Irish Church is swept to the bottom of the Dead Sea. We are a nondescript club altogether. Of course the political element exists amongst us ; but then we have introduced so many other elements that we have almost swamped it. No, sir," adds Mr. Fitz Patrick in an emphatic tone of voice, "well-to-do money-lenders and deucedly good dinners, those are our two *spécialités* ; and, sir, let me tell you," continues Mr. Fitz Patrick in a smothered but significant whisper, "no such bad things either when one's purse is empty and one's stomach follows suit."

Such is the review of the Reform and of the great part that it plays in the social and economical system of London, taken by one of not the least eminent of its members ; in certain particulars possibly over-coloured and exaggerated, but in the main correct enough. The Reform has, in truth, as a political organization, failed to adhere to the pure integrity of its original purpose in a very signal manner. Walk into the morning room, say about five P.M., and with a very humble modicum of experience you will at once detect the fact that the atmosphere is by no means exclusively political, that the company by which you are surrounded is coloured by a predominant representation of commercial interests ; in a word, that you have more City men about you than you

have votaries of St. Stephen's. Yet you may, and for this reason, find food for contemplation of an exceptionally amusing character. Perhaps the observant reader will kindly direct his eyes yonder to where a capacious form occupies one of the nooks of one of the windows looking into Pall Mall. That capacious form and that rubicund countenance belong to Tobias Cruppins, Esq., a name well known on 'Change, and highly respected by the waiters at the Reform. What are politics to him, or he to politics? His sympathies are imprisoned within the narrow limits of his counting-office, and his golden dreams are of five per cent. But Cruppins is a man of high social aspirations. He has been made a member of the Reform, and has endeavoured to acquire the instincts of a politician. At present the evening paper is before him—the 'Pall Mall Gazette' probably: the 'Pall Mall' is supposed to support the present Liberal Ministry, while moreover, Cruppins has a vague kind of idea that its perusal implies a degree of superior intelligence on the part of the reader. Wistfully, ever and anon, does he turn from the leader on the front page to the three columns of City Intelligence at the end; there his heart is, but he must keep up appearances. Enter a jaunty politician, fresh from the House, with the red rose of Lancaster blooming in his button-hole. He has reason for cultivating the *entente cordiale* with Cruppins. To Cruppins he walks up. The conversation assumes a political complexion. Cruppins likes to talk politics, or more correctly speaking, to have

politics talked to him in the morning-room of the Reform. It gives him a kind of brevet rank as a statesman. But Cruppins is uncommonly careful lest he should commit himself. His questions are cautiously evaded, and his expressions of opinion assume the tone of a dubious partizanship. Still Mr. Flippet, that is the name of the honourable senator who has just strolled in, continues his colloquy with Cruppins; for Mr. Flippet knows Cruppins's weak points well. He is perfectly aware that on all political matters—penetration is Mr. Flippet's strong point—Tobias Cruppins, Esq., is rather more ignorant than the small page boy who, at this moment, is handing him a note; but then he can discern, with his accustomed shrewdness, that Cruppins would fain have his ignorance ignored. And Mr. Flippet has a reason for fondling this weakness. The name of Cruppins, as we have hinted above, is an active power in the City, and Octavius Flippet, Esq., M.P., has a passion for dabbling in companies.

If the English nation does not love coalitions, we may fairly say that English clubs do not take kindly to compromises. Now we have not the least wish to speak in a derogatory or disparaging manner of an institution so venerable, and one would imagine so representative, of a great party in the State as the Reform; but there is no denying the fact, the Reform Club is a compromise; not indeed a political compromise, but a compromise between an association formed for the propagation of certain party principles and of a miscellaneous combination for the

enjoyment of certain social advantages or luxuries. It follows that the one pre-eminently distinctive feature of the Reform Club is its entire absence of any such characteristic in its combination. Take another look round the room in which we are at present supposed to be. Do you not notice a very different aspect of things and persons generally from that which was observable say at either of the Carltons? Perhaps there are thirty gentlemen in the apartment. Who are they? Well, if you will look yonder you will see rather a celebrity, the tribune of the people, the Right Hon. John Bright happens to have wandered in. He nods in a somewhat brusque manner to two or three acquaintances as he hurriedly walks up to the table on which some of the evening papers are lying. He gives a rapid glance over perhaps two; suddenly pulls out his watch, seems to be struck by the novelty of the idea that he is a Cabinet Minister, drops his eye-glass, refixes it, and with a sublimely unconscious air that his fellow-creatures are standing or are seated on either side of him, makes his exit. The President of the Board of Trade is not a gentleman who cares much about being button-holed in the morning-room of the Reform Club. With the exception of the member for Birmingham, the other representatives of the English Commons whom you may see do not belong even to the respectable section of mediocrities, but are drawn from the extreme division of obscurities. Even of these there are not more than some three or four. The remainder of the company is composed

of gentlemen mainly drafted from that class, pillars doubtless of British commerce, the Hon. Laurence Fitz Patrick's account of whom we have already given. There is a country squire or so come up for a few weeks to town; one or two barristers fresh from the dust of chambers, some middle-aged underwriters at Lloyd's, very likely a stray parson, but there is nothing at all approaching to unity or uniformity of appearance. Consequently the impression left on your mind by your visit to the Reform is that it is not a political, but that it is a patchwork club. The pervading atmosphere of the Carlton is one of keen eagle-eyed interest; the pervading atmosphere of the Reform is one of political apathy, or of a kind of suspended political animation; and this is precisely what might have been expected from the relation in which the two parties that these clubs severally symbolize stand towards each other. Where is the greater measure of determination and zeal to be found—amongst the band of men who defend a citadel and who fight for their lives, or amongst the army which attacks?

If you receive an invitation to dine at the Reform Club, by all means accept it; the more so if the hospitable friend by whom it is issued happen to be such an one as Mr. Desborough Ranger; for Desborough is a capital fellow, and knows what a dinner ought to be. Yes, Desborough is a Reform man, though why, he does not exactly know, nor do you either. Is he a political character? Well, the fact of the matter is that he is a little

of every thing—a veritable Jack-of-all-trades, save in one particular respect, that there may be reasonably said to be none of which he is not to a certain extent the master. *Nullum tetigit quod non ornavit* is quite as true of D. Ranger, Esq., head-sensation leader-writer for the ‘People’s Banner,’ multiform and multitudinous as a magazinist, ubiquitous as “Our Own Correspondent,” prolific as author of novels, travels, anything you like, as it even was of “Poor Noll, who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll.” Desborough indeed can talk as well as write; his conversation is quite on a par with his writing, and that is saying no little; he has just as many themes for the one as he has for the other. What do you want to discourse about—high art or literature? dine with Desborough; the customs and fashions of divers countries? dine with Desborough; for Desborough has been everywhere, has in fact so completely exhausted in his descriptive writing every corner of the civilized, and a good many corners of the uncivilized, globe, as to believe that it would be in the interests of the journal which he represents if any other “little pellet of earth,” in the shape of a second world could be invented. But talking or listening alone is edifying and amusing for a time, but without certain accessories in the way of fluids, should, in the opinion of Mr. Desborough Ranger, and perhaps yourself, be eschewed. Dine then by all means with this gentleman: a better host is a blank impossibility. He knows, as we have said, what a dinner should be like.

Has he not feasted in every capital of Europe, on the richest and rarest luxuries which it can supply? does he not know by heart the *menu* of Philippe's? has he not roundly censured *chefs* in Vienna, Mexico, and where not else, when they have failed to supply his palate in the exact condition in which he chanced to desire them, some delicate dainty, some choice morsel? When Mr. Ranger orders dinner at the Reform, the cook well knows that he has got his work cut out for him, realizes fully the fact that he is put upon his mettle, and that if the soup has not exactly the flavour which it ought to have, if the *entrées* fall at all short of the prescribed standard of perfection, if the *vol-au-vent* does not show the touch of an artist and a master, or if the *soufflé* is not in reality a trifle considerably lighter than air, Mr. Ranger is not a man to take much trouble to conceal his disapproval; and the menials of the establishment know it well, too. Not very long since Mr. Desborough Ranger had invited two or three gentlemen to dine with him at the Reform, had arranged his dinner on the highest principles of the gourmand's art, and had diligently selected a table at which there would be just the proper modicum of light, enough to kindle with a cheerful beam the glasses and the plate, enough to cast the ruby reflection of rich burgundy upon the spotless damask cloth, but not enough profusely to dazzle the eyes of the banquetters. It so happened that on the same night our worthy friend Tobias Cruppins, Esq., had made up his mind to entertain

a couple of guests at the Reform Club, and as luck would have it, the dinners of Desborough and Cruppins were announced almost simultaneously as ready. Cruppins, however, got the start, and accordingly led the way, followed by his comrades, into the dining-room. By an accident he was just on the point of seating himself at the table which Desborough a few hours since had so carefully singled out. Providence, however, interposed; a waiter discovered in due time the hideous error, rushed up to Tobias Cruppins, Esq., and, with terror and panic depicted upon his countenance, exclaimed in accents of ludicrously piteous supplication, "Please sir, move as quickly as possible; that table is reserved for Mr. Ranger and a party of friends, and they are just on the point of coming into the room." The request was not made a moment too soon; and before Mr. Cruppins could fairly get clear of the folds of the table-cloth, in walked Desborough and his friends.

But unmistakable as is the amount of wholesome awe with which the waiters regard the possibility of Mr. Ranger's reprimand, it is as nothing to the terror with which they seek to anticipate the commands of Bolter Helluo, Esq. Mr. Helluo is a gentleman whose business hours are devoted to mercantile pursuits, and who if his leisure hours cannot be devoted to dining thinks they are little better than lost. Greased lightning is, we believe, a vulgar simile for speed; if you would realize to the full the rapidity of motion which it is intended to denote,

you should watch the manner in which the aforesaid menials execute the mandates of Helluo. Very recently indeed Helluo was playing the part of host to a select company of guests. The dinner was unusually excellent. The *chef* of the Reform Club had even surpassed himself. The whole earth had been ransacked for relishes; each particular purveyor of Leadenhall Market had been laid under contribution for divers species of game. Nothing, in fact, could be more perfect. But there was one little omission; the waiters, in their nervous anxiety to anticipate each want of Mr. Helluo, had forgotten to serve up the vegetables; by a lamentable coincidence the same temporary oblivion had also taken possession of the cook. As for Bolter, largely occupied with discoursing to his friends on the subject of wines, and himself not much given to the kindly fruits of the earth, he had failed to notice the oversight. Presently, however, interposed one of his guests, "Of course, Helluo, you know everything; but is it now completely *de rigueur* that no vegetables should be eaten?" The remark acted in precisely the same way that the application of a match does to a powder-magazine. For a moment before the explosion there was a lull; Helluo dropped his fork—he was in the act of lifting a portion of a truffle to his mouth—"Waiter," he thundered; "then he spoke, his bosom shaken by a sudden storm of oaths"—quotation must here take the place of description. It is enough to say that in less than a minute half-a-dozen powdered and red-plushed menials flew off as arrows from

a bow to the regions of the kitchen ; that in a short space of time vegetables of every conceivable description were handed round with an air of humiliation, repentance, and remorse to the guests of Mr. Helluo, and that Bolter had so far recovered his equanimity as to condescend to say to the head-waiter, who came up formally to tender his apologies, in reply to a series of sentences significant of a penitence grovelling enough to suit the Sultan himself, in tones of dignified reproach that he would consent to overlook it this once, but that the omission must not occur again. It is unnecessary to pursue the evening farther, it is enough to say that nothing more occurred of a character calculated to interrupt its harmony.

The membership of men of the Desborough Ranger order is, however, a godsend for a club whose prevailing characteristics are a decorous dullness and a monotonous respectability. Ranger knows every one ; every one who knows Ranger is glad to meet him. His entrance into the smoking-room is hailed as a blessing. There is nothing better worth hearing in London than a contest of wit between him and Mr. Nugans Hahah, who enjoys, or rather enjoyed, the reputation of being the funniest member of the last Parliament. In these days we are fast approaching the catastrophe which terminates the ' Dunciad,' and there seems to be a prospect, and that at no very distant period, of universal dullness covering all. Of course, therefore, at the last election Mr. Nugans Hahah lost his seat for—well, we will let the reader who is anxious to know the

name of this crass constituency look up the election intelligence contained in 'The Times' of November, 1868. Nugans has, therefore, been compelled to retire into private life; but with what an air did he make his final bow to his erewhile constituents; with what an ineffable touch of Attic salt did he flavour the farewell rhetorical dish which he served up for their benefit! Every one applauded, friends and foes alike; as for the ladies they were in ecstasies. What else could they be when Nugans, in the moment of expatiating on the subject of his defeat, imprinted a kiss on the fair hand of the wife of one of his successful rivals, bowed gallantly to the wife of the other, and declared that his victory was a moral impossibility, seeing that his opponents had such irresistible advocates of their claims. Mr. Nugans Hahah, however, is not a man to take a rebuff with any great amount of disheartening despair. His is emphatically a lively mind; and we venture to predict that if Nugans is not once more ensconced in St. Stephen's by the time these lines are before the public, the period during which our depressed Parliament will have to wait for his advent will be exceedingly short. Parliament has gained nothing by the loss of Mr. Nugans Hahah. The Reform Club would become a moral refrigerator if either Nugans or Ranger ceased to frequent its precincts.

Mr. Disraeli, in his novel of 'Sybil,' makes one of his characters account in an ingenious manner for the prevalence of breakfast parties in Liberal circles.

"I am afraid we have lost him," remarks Lady Forebrace, a staunch Tory—the "him" being the hero of the romance, Charles Egremont.

"I have always been expecting it," said Lady St. Julians. "He breakfasts with that Mr. Trenchard, and does all those sort of things. Men who breakfast out are generally Liberals. Have not you observed that? I wonder why?"

"It shows a restless, revolutionary mind," said Lady Forebrace, "that can settle to nothing, but must be running after gossip the moment they are awake."

"Yes," said Lady St. Julians. "I think those men who breakfast out are generally dangerous characters. At least, I would not trust them!"

Whether this line of argument would apply in the case of the arrangements of club life, we do not know. If so, the Reform Club ought to be a perfect hotbed of revolution; for, between the hours of nine and twelve, its coffee-room is generally crowded with members who are partaking of this pernicious and nefarious meal. Breakfast constitutes indeed rather a *spécialité* at the Reform Club. Probably, however, the circumstance is to be attributed less to the innate tendency on the part of the Reform Club men to plots, stratagems, and conspiracies, than to the fact that an art, almost universally ignored in England, that of breakfast cookery, is cultivated with a considerable degree of success in the *cuisine* of the association. At any rate, there is no indication of any sinister designs in

the modest parties which you may observe in the apartment in which we have already seen Mr. Bolter Helluo entertain his friends, congregated any morning between the hours that we have specified. Conspicuous silence is the order of the day. Those who are breakfasting alone munch their toast and read the paper with a moody taciturnity; those who sit down with acquaintances or guests, seem to make but little way from a conversational point of view. This is as it should be. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, any attempt at sociability at breakfast must be a failure. Breakfast is, in fact, emphatically an unsociable meal; we mean of course the English breakfast in its homely sense as the inaugural meal of the day, taking place at from nine to ten o'clock. In the first place, the majority of persons are not disposed or able to make themselves as mutually agreeable ten minutes after they have completed their shaving, as they are when subsequently the day has arrived at a more mature period of its existence. If you want to listen to amusing repartee, to pungent epigram, to really good talk, you must not expect to meet with it in the course of the first half-hour subsequent to your emersion from your constitutional tub. In spite of the Homeric proposition that the generation of men resembles the generation of leaves, it certainly bears no natural affinity to the floral genus; for it is precisely when the petals of the flower begin to close, that the petals of a genial and jocose humanity principally love to expand themselves. In the second place, it is the natural

thing at breakfast to wish to commune with oneself; to feel a craving for inspecting the newspaper, or to deliberately decide how the coming exigencies of the next twelve hours may be met. There are certain difficulties which must be conquered by luncheon; there are obstacles which must be overcome before you dress for dinner. How, we should like as a matter of mere curiosity to know, is a man who has a couple of bills to take up by noon, and a decided deficit in his balance at his bankers, to blossom forth into light badinage and antithetical modes of expression, when he longs to be pondering in solitude over a lonely chop, when the one object next to his heart is the possibility of renewal on the part of Moss and Mofuz, or the sanction to overdraw yet another fifty pounds, when his representations to his banker are backed up by the reassurances of his solicitor. Now, we have not the slightest wish to dogmatize, but breakfast is and must remain an essentially unsocial meal. Monsters there are whose powers of consumption of food are abnormally developed, who are able to look at their letters without a series of nervous twinges, and whose lack-lustre equanimity is imperturbable; to whom a breakfast party seems just as rational as a dinner party; but these savages are not the men to make a gathering, whatever the time at which it is held, a success; to enliven it with refined jests, or illuminate it with the playful flashes of a grotesque intellect. No man who can talk at all should be expected to talk at the earliest till after luncheon. To ask a friend of this de-

scription to breakfast is an insult ; to endeavour to draw him out is an injury. The best kind of conversation is a timid flower which dreads the garish splendour of day. Good wax-lights and a well-selected dinner—these are the conditions under which epigram may be expected.

To see the Reform, when the elements of political enthusiasm which it contains are wrought up to their highest pitch of excitement, it must, as in the case of the Carlton already mentioned, be visited after the sun has fallen below the horizon during the Parliamentary session, when the debate going on at the House is on some question of serious importance. The emotions of the moment are imparted by those who really feel them to those whose interest is primarily factitious or feigned. Cruppins and his friends are carried away by the prevailing enthusiasm, and rise every few minutes uneasily from their seats to rush out into the lobby with the view of inspecting the latest telegrams from the House. On such occasions the scene is much that which we have witnessed at the opposition club a few doors farther down Pall Mall. There are the same knots of conversationalists scattered here and there discussing the nature of the situation, and passing their comments upon the policy of their leaders ; there is the same atmosphere of inveterate gossip, the same rush for dinner. On such evenings the smoking-room at the Reform—an admirably arranged and capitally ventilated apartment by-the-by—bursts out into an unwonted blaze of glory. The well-to-do sons of commerce, the prosperous

bill discounters, the briefless and the busy barrister, the underwriters of Lloyd's, regard these as gala days in the annals of their clubs. Cruppins and Blogg and Jugge, Brown, Smith, Jones, and Robinson, all feel that they are invested with a certain indefinable and inexpressible halo of importance by being allowed to sit in the same room as that in which the heroes of the Westminster fray are discussing the events of the contest that is past, and the many possible contingencies of the campaign which is to come. Blogg will go home and will retail the next day to his city friends at dinner the flippant chit-chat which he heard in "the club" overnight. If he is informed that it is the intention of the Ministry, according to the newspapers, not to proceed with such and such a bill, or to urge forward immediately such and such a measure, Blogg will shake his head in a mysterious manner, and intimate, in a tone of the approved "we could say an we would" order, that the public prints are not so well informed on these matters as they might be; that the real place where councils of state are held is not Downing Street, but the Reform Club; and that half-an-hour in the smoking-room of this Palladium of British Liberalism is worth more in the way of giving you an insight into the political future than a thousand official and authoritative utterances by those newspapers whose inspiration is supposed by an innocent and uninitiated public to be rigidly and veraciously ministerial. For one report which bears upon its surface the *imprimatur* of the Carlton, there are at least twenty to

which is affixed the endorsement of the Reform Club. The reason, we believe, is to be found in the fact that we have stated—the larger extent to which a heterogeneous and non-political element exists in this latter establishment. The smoking-room of the Carlton with its gentle flow of diplomatic speculation, is a *terra incognita*, an inaccessible region to your Cruppinse and your Bloggs.

Let us survey the scene for a minute or two. You may notice, lounging in yonder easy chair in yonder corner, a gentleman whose face you may possibly recognize. He is of course in evening dress : his coat is of the very latest cut, and fits him as perfectly as if nature had been the tailor. Perhaps his jewellery is just a trifle too valuable, and too lavishly displayed. We will call him, if you please, Mr. Bonde. In his way he is a very considerable personage indeed. Business is his *métier* : he has an office in the City ; he also has an office in the West End, close to Saville Row. Rumour says that Mr. Bonde is more usually to be found in his West End chambers than in his City counting-house ; that his real business is transacted at the former, and that the clients whom he principally courts are gentlemen who are the heirs presumptive to valuable entailed estates. Mr. Bonde has an ambition. He aspires to get into Parliament. Taking the means at his disposal in connection with the results made manifest at the general election last year, it is an end which he will probably accomplish. Meanwhile, his first step has been

secured. The Hon. Laurence Fitz Patrick achieved his promotion to the Reform Club two years ago. Mr. Bonde is a wise man, and, inasmuch as he has learned to await patiently his opportunity, may be considered to be on the high road to ultimate success. Mr. Bonde is greeted with considerable cordiality and studied deference by many of the gentlemen who are in the smoking-room to-night. One Mr. Scattercash Goosequill, a great writer in the *Mousetrap*, strolls into the apartment, and finds his seat in the immediate neighbourhood of Mr. Bonde: there is nothing which Mr. Bonde conceives it more to his advantage to do than to cultivate the acquaintance and good-will of influential journalists. Scattercash drinks cold brandy and water; the former fluid standing towards the latter in the relation of four to one. Mr. Bonde adheres to German seltzer; it keeps his head cool, and his hand steady. A somewhat protracted conversation, conducted in tones cautiously low, ensues between the pair: perhaps its upshot may be guessed when the concluding sentence is mentioned:—"You know, Mr. Goosequill, there is some difficulty in arranging the matter; but call upon me at twelve to-morrow and we will see what can be done." Presently the Hon. Laurence Fitz Patrick moves up to the great financier. The two resolve themselves into a committee of ways and means. Mr. Fitz Patrick announces to Mr. Bonde that one of his father's Irish boroughs must inevitably be vacant by the certain death of the sitting member within a month.

Mr. Bonde shall have all the support which the great Fitz Patrick family can command; and that is quite enough to ensure the absence of any contest. Mr. Bonde is profuse in his expressions of gratitude.

“By-the-by, Bonde, when could you manage to see me to-morrow? I particularly wish to speak to you,” are the finishing words of Mr. Fitz Patrick’s confidences.

Mr. Bonde reflects for one moment, not more. He will telegraph the first thing to-morrow morning to private agents in Ireland, who are acquainted with the borough to which the Hon. Fitz Patrick has alluded, and who know precisely the influence of that gentleman’s family and name. The result will be communicated to him by post. To-morrow will be Tuesday; the letter will thus reach him early on Wednesday; and by this letter Mr. Bonde will regulate his negotiations with the Hon. Laurence Fitz Patrick. Mr. Bonde is exceedingly sorry, but he is compelled to go out of town to-morrow, and he will not be back before noon on Wednesday. At that hour he will be most happy to see Mr. Fitz Patrick; or perhaps that gentleman would do him (Mr. Bonde) the honour of lunching with him at two precisely, at his office in Clifford Street.

This little episode may explain the terse and expressive manner in which the Hon. Laurence Fitz Patrick, at the commencement of this chapter, characterized one of the advantages of belonging to the Reform Club.

CHAPTER IX.

EPISODE OF THE JUNIOR REFORM CLUB.

The Reform League — Its aspirations after Club Life — Messrs. Octavius Ochlocrat, Hyberbolus Smith, and Cleon Stiggins, Esq. — Appearance of Mr. Weesil Openide — The Club started — Mr. Openide's terms and arguments — The Club diners and dinners — The great catastrophe — *Non missura cutem nisi plena cruoris hirudo* — Finale.

IN these days of Brummagem ware and electro-plate, of Madaine Rachel and chignons, of false hearts and sham complexions, persons who cannot obtain the real, whatever may be the commodity of which they are in quest, will content themselves readily enough with the spurious. Imitation is ubiquitous. Each new or desirable invention is sure to be copied, and copied in a thousand ways. We have established amongst us a system of paper credit, of bubble companies, and of fragile banks, sure to break whenever the first strain comes. It is only natural that a certain class of adventurers should have attempted to find occupation for their energies in the wide social field of club life. If fortunes have been made by the promoters of sham joint-stock loan societies, why should they not be made by the promoters of sham clubs? The stream of

fools is perennial ; so long as there are knaves there will be no deficiency of dupes.

We propose in this chapter to give some account of the manner in which these ingenious gentlemen conduct their operations. It will certainly point a moral, and as for the tale, such as it is, which it will be found to contain, it is at any rate drawn from the world of fact, and is not merely founded upon, but absolutely constitutes, what actually occurred not very long ago.

From a political point of view, Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill may or may not have been a general boon and blessing to the nation ; from a social point of view it must be accounted an unmitigated mercy. It completely took the ground away from beneath the feet of ranters, who realized a perennial stock of political capital in querulously expatiating upon the grievances, to which the intelligent sons of English labour were subjected. In plain and brief language, it robbed that unqualified body of nuisances and bores, calling themselves the Reform League, of their occupation. When there was no Reform to agitate for, what was the further significance of the word "Reformer?" It is to a certain episode in the career of these gentlemen, as a corporate society, that the remarks which we are here going to introduce have reference.

To establish a League was doubtless a feat ; but it was not everything. Chambers in Adelphi Terrace were all very well for the purpose of strictly business transactions ; but they supplied a very insufficient area indeed for the

expansion and display of that social life which is an important element in the coherence and the welfare of every political association. The League has, indeed, already earned for itself a name ; but in the way of a local habitation its ambitions were not yet achieved. Elate with a sense of their importance, patronized by the chiefs of Radical statesmanship, it occurred to the more prominent members of the Reform League that they must show further proof of their existence by establishing a club. The decision was one which, though easy to arrive at, was not so easily carried out. Unaccustomed to the formation of organizations of the kind, very slightly imbued with the rudimentary principles of active political co-operation, Messrs. Octavius Ochlocrat, Hyperbolus Smith, and Cleon Stiggins, Esq.—these composed the trio who were obliging enough to take the main management of the bold design into their hands—found, upon a very moderate amount of reflection, that they did not exactly know at what end to begin. Stiggins did indeed belong to a fourth-rate club already established, and was consequently appealed to, as likely to prove an authority on the matter ; but Stiggins' replies were so general in their character, and so oracular in their tone, that they failed to throw any genuine light upon the question. A happy thought struck Ochlocrat that a kind of affiliation to the existing Reform Club might be possible. The authorities, accordingly, of this institution were consulted, but they did not seem to take to the proposition with that degree of eagerness and enthusiasm,

which Ochlocrat, Smith, and Stiggins perhaps had reason to expect, and the result was that "the dauntless three" found themselves more at a loss than ever.

One fine morning, however, Hyperbolus Smith came down to the rooms in Adelphi Terrace in great glee. The puzzle was solved, the enigma was cleared, the Gordian knot was very shortly to be cut. It turned out that on the previous evening Hyperbolus Smith had been induced to take the chair at a discussion, which had occurred in a place known as Podgers' Hall, and had there met with an exceedingly attractive and business-like gentleman—one Mr. Weesil Openide—"a capital fellow, one of the right sort for us beyond a doubt," said the enthusiastic Hyperbolus; "is very anxious to work with us and for us too; and uncommonly useful he can make himself, or my name is not Hyperbolus Smith. I told him about our idea of a club. He pronounced it the one thing we wanted to make our organization effective and complete. I thought from the fellow's tone he knew something of this sort of thing, and I was determined to draw him out"—Hyperbolus Smith prided himself on his acumen—"to cut a long story short, Openide told me that he would guarantee to get the whole thing up; and I now suggest that in the evening the question should be put to the vote:" without which preliminary it was a point of principle never to do anything in the chambers at Adelphi Terrace.

That same evening the measure was duly proposed.

For the sum of fifty pounds, money down, Mr. Weesil Openide was to arrange the preliminaries, was to secure an eligible house, and was to be authorized to call, as the representative of the Junior Reform Club, on such persons as the Provisional Committee might consider desirable. Of course it was clearly to be understood that all expenses incurred were to be borne by the Leaguers themselves; and as a necessary result of this understanding, it became incumbent to open a subscription list without further loss of time. Within half-an-hour of this proceeding Hyperbolus Smith begged to inform his colleagues that he had the pleasure to introduce to them the gentleman who had been good enough to volunteer his valuable assistance—Mr. Weesil Openide. Now Mr. Openide, judging from his appearance, was not exactly the kind of man that any one inspired with a lesser measure of innocence than that enjoyed by Messrs. Ochlocrat, Smith, and Stiggins would have particularly cared to trust the management of his private affairs. There was a very strongly-defined expression of cunning in his countenance, and there was a little too much plausibility in his conversation. Perhaps, too, his costume had that indefinable air of flashy splendour, which is almost always found upon the person of the adventurer. But neither the trio in particular nor the body of the League in general seemed to care for any of these things. Mr. Weesil Openide addressed the assembly in a neat and appropriate speech, and on his departure with Hyperbolus Smith, it was unanimously voted that they had

got the right man in the right place—a conclusion in which Mr. Openide would have entirely acquiesced—and that the thanks of the meeting were expressly due to Hyperbolus Smith, Esq., for the activity and zeal which he had evinced for the common good.

In six months within this time the Junior Reform Club became an accomplished fact. There was some difficulty at first about getting a house, and the more so that there was a still greater difficulty about getting members. Curiously enough the idea of a Junior Reform Club did not take. Reformers at large outside the walls of the offices in Adelphi Terrace did not quite appear to like the idea of paying down their six guineas subscription and fifteen guineas entrance fee—those being the terms which Mr. Openide had suggested, and which had been agreed to on all hands—for the privileges of belonging to a club that was mainly controlled and managed by three such presiding geniuses as Messrs. Ochlocrat, Smith, and Stiggins. However, Mr. Weesil Openide, in whom the implicit confidence of all was naturally placed, assured them that this difficulty was inevitable ; that precisely the same obstacles arose in the case of the origination of every such body ; that with patience they were easily surmountable ; that seeing the popularity of the political principles of which the Junior Reform would stand forth as the corporate and collective champion, to say nothing of the indisputable tendency of the whole of nineteenth-century civilization to gravitate towards club life, it was morally

certain that before six months were over, their books would literally be crowded with a list of applicants for the honour of membership, and that meanwhile they had, he (Mr. W. Openide) ventured to hope one, if not two, important elements, he might term them guarantees, of success—a capital house—the house in question was taken on a lease at the rate of something over twelve hundred a-year—and, if he might presume to say so, a secretary of indefatigable energy. It is needless to observe that to this post Mr. Openide had punctually contrived to get himself appointed, at an annual salary of 250*l.*—the first year paid in advance—and with a provision that six months' notice or six months' pay should accompany any rupture of the arrangement. Mr. Openide, it may be also premised, had altogether received one hundred pounds for the time and trouble that he had bestowed upon the disposition of the various preliminaries before the Junior Reform Club could fairly take possession of their new quarters, in one of the best and most expensive streets, within a stone's throw of Burlington Gardens. Altogether whatever prospect there was for the association itself, there was no question but that Mr. Weesil Openide had contrived to feather his nest uncommonly well.

The members of the Junior Reform Club certainly exhibited an air of complacency, resolution, and fortitude. There was scarcely one who had not been induced to contribute some sum, additional of course to his regular subscription and entrance-fee, to the support of the esta-

blishment. Week after week passed away, and the chance of the club's ripening into the brilliant triumph which the sanguine Mr. Openide had prognosticated did not appear to increase. Still they hoped on ; still they endeavoured to find consolation in the fact that if they had spent their money, they at least had something to show for it. It was impossible that anything could exceed the pride of the worthy trio we have already mentioned, or indeed of anyone else who belonged to the Junior Reform Club, when bent upon hospitality. They had invited a friend or two to dinner, and felt that they were charged with the onerous responsibilities of doing the honours of the establishment. It was really a great sight to see the air with which Hyperbolus Smith would point out to his guests the different apartments, and to hear the tone in which, as a man accustomed every day in his life to have at least two servants standing behind his chair at dinner, he would give his orders, great and small, to the club menials. Thus it was that the novelty of the situation completely made up for any drain that it had involved upon the pockets of those who were determined to enjoy it ; and to speak the truth, the appointments and arrangements of the Junior Reform Club were excellent. The only thing wanted was an accession of members.

These, however, did not and would not come ; and at last the gloss and charm of freshness began to wear away. It was impossible to keep the matter a secret any longer ; the club was in want of funds. The dinners ceased to be

good, simply because the tradesmen were not regularly paid, and began to demur about continuing their supplies. The waiters assumed an attitude of self-assertive independence; they wanted certain arrears of wages; and lastly, Mr. Openide formally applied to the committee for his last quarter's salary. The period had now arrived at which it would have been affectation to deny that matters were growing serious. Messrs. Octavius Ochlocrat, Hyperbolus Smith, and Cleon Stiggins had more than one moody and melancholy conversation as to the turn which affairs had taken. They roundly cursed their own folly; they cursed the appearance of Openide upon the stage more roundly still; Ochlocrat and Stiggins even so far forgot themselves, we are sorry to say, as to curse Hyperbolus Smith for the manner in which he had introduced them to "that infernal swindler." The upshot of a few more of these meetings was briefly this. It was agreed that it was quite impossible to carry on the club any longer; that the lease of the house occupied should, if possible, be disposed of, and that the furniture and fittings of the establishment should be straightway sold to go towards defraying expenses. The determination was sufficiently humiliating; but as the committee were mainly composed of family men, the thought occurred to them that it might be advisable not to fritter away, in fruitless attempts to propagate the principles of their party, sums which might be more advantageously applied to the furtherance and support of their domestic interests.

Within a week of this decision being taken, the outside of the Junior Reform Club, and the inside too, assumed an appearance very different from that which had characterized them three months since. Auction bills were pasted against the windows; the furniture was apportioned into lots; everything was for sale. In the eyes of Hyperbolus Smith and his friends, all this seemed like desecration. Their pet arm-chairs, their favourite couches, all were going. The whole scheme had broken through. The association which was to rival the original Reform Club in Piccadilly had completely collapsed. They were, in fact, clubless. But the most painful portion of the episode, its final catastrophe, had yet to come. It was bitter enough to the members of the J. R. C. to relinquish their design; but there was a drop in the cup more bitter even yet.

The furniture was sold and the lease was disposed of; but there was a certain gentleman who was not disposed of, and the name of that gentleman was Weesil Openide. Mr. Openide, like a sagacious man, stuck to the terms of his agreement. It had been arranged that this could only be terminated by six months' notice, or six months' salary. Here, then, was a further claim of 175*l.* upon the three enthusiasts who had originally made themselves responsible for the fulfilment of the terms upon which they had covenanted for the services of Mr. Weesil Openide. Nor was this all. There were no less than three half-quarters of his regular salary in arrears, thus making in all a sum

of 306l. 5s. We should be sorry to be under the necessity of recapitulating here the energetic expression to which this claim of Weesil Openide gave rise on the parts of Messrs. Ochlocrat, Smith, and Stiggins. It is enough to say that they repudiated the debt *in toto*; that they plainly informed Weesil Openide, almost *totidem verbis*, that he was nothing better than a speculative swindler, and that they would see him a good deal farther before they should think of handing him over the sum he wanted. They were true to their word, they did see him farther; but after all not such a very great distance—merely to a court of justice. Curiously enough, it was the opinion of an enlightened jury, whose sympathies for the advanced radicalism of Messrs. Ochlocrat, Smith, and Stiggins were presumably small, that the claim of the late secretary of the J. R. C. was valid, that the letter of the agreement still held good, and that Weesil Openide was entitled to the sum in full which he demanded. From this verdict there was of course no appeal; and the result was that before a fortnight was over Mr. Openide was in possession of a cheque for the requisite sum. The indignant coterie threatened, indeed, violently to bring an action against this imperious gentleman for obtaining money from them on false principles; but on mature reflection they have not yet seen fit to carry their threat into execution. As for Mr. Openide, he may be still pursuing his career as club promoter for all we know to the contrary; as for Octavius Ochlocrat, Hyperbolus Smith, and

Cleon Stiggins, Esquires, they have probably received a lesson which will cause them only to take up again, with an extreme amount of caution and circumspection, the edged and dangerous tools that are used in the art of club-mongering.

CHAPTER X.

UNIVERSITY CLUBS.

General character of University Clubs — Special reasons for their success — Why Public School Clubs should fail and University Clubs succeed — General character of the Old University Club — Types of Club Waiters — The Rev. Charles Merton — Rev. O. Kennard — Mr. Blandwell and Country Squires — The Club on great occasions.

AMONG the most successful club ventures which the present century has yet seen, a prominent place must certainly be assigned to those institutions whose *raison d'être* is to be found in the fact that a University training has, at some time or other, been enjoyed by their various members. There are two main advantages which this principle of formation possesses. In the first place it rests upon a basis sufficiently broad to ensure an adequate succession and supply of candidates. In these days, when an academical education is by some means or other brought to the doors and within the reach of every one, it is almost the exception to meet with a member of any of the civil professions, who has not spent some portion of his youth on the banks of the Isis or the Cam. In the second place, the rationale of selection is at the same time

calculated to derive just that degree of coherence and of community of interest and ideas which, whether the club be large or small, go a great way amongst its members towards making the institution socially pleasant and financially successful. Much as the fact has doubtless been exaggerated, it is still true that however various be the pursuits in which they subsequently engage, there seldom ceases to exist amongst University men a certain species of freemasonry. They have all had a common starting-point ; have all been subjected to much the same influences ; have all inhaled a somewhat similar atmosphere. As years pass by, distance tends to obliterate many differences in the use which they have made of their opportunities, and to supply instead a common fund of identity of association. Robinson ceases to remember the fact that when he was at Christ Church or Trinity in '35, the main business of his life was to see how many days he could secure a week with the old Berkshire or the North Cambridgeshire, and that the ambitions of Brown were limited to the more studious precincts of the schools or the senate house. Years ago, *consule Planco*, when the veins of Robinson were hot with the blood of youth, it is possible, nay it is probable, that he may have regarded Brown as a bookworm or a sap. But all is changed now : Robinson is a barrister ; so is Brown. They are frequently occupied in the same cases, sometimes with, sometimes against, each other ; and when the harness is laid down for the day, the circumstance that they were

both at college together seems to supply them with an endearing link of intercourse.

It is probable, too, that a great deal of the social success which has attended the clubs must be attributed to the fact that the Universities from which their members are drafted are two, and two only. For all practical purposes, unless a man has been either at Oxford or Cambridge, he has no claim to be considered a University man at all. We believe that the institution in Gower Street and that the academical schools of Edinburgh are most praiseworthy in their way. We do not wish for a moment to impugn the profundity of the erudition or the soundness of the scholarship which students at any of these seats of learning may carry away from them, but for our present purpose we have very little to do with a comparison of the knowledge of Latin and Greek, of physics and philosophy, which is to be gained respectively at the new Universities and the old. It is a capital thing if you can commence life with a fellowship; and doubtless an acquaintance with hydrostatics and dynamics invests you to a certain extent with some degree of intellectual superiority over your friend who merely obtained a pass, or came out in the poll. But after all it must be remembered that the inscription which Socrates penned above the portals of his school does not surmount the doorways to success and reputation in ordinary life; and that neither fortune nor fame are in the habit of saying to their votaries, "Let no one who has not studied geometry

enter here." In the great battle of existence a man is judged of and rewarded not by what he has done, but by what he does; and it is, as numberless failures are every year proving, a fatal mistake to suppose that the triumph of manhood is at all a necessary *sequitur* from the successes of youth: "There be some who have an early ripeness in their years which fadeth betimes." Heaven forbid that we should decry academical culture! This is not the place to discuss its influence or to attempt to appraise its value; we are concerned here with the Universities as social educators, and as the harmonizers of club life; and viewed in this light it is fortunate that they may be considered as numerically only two. Were it otherwise, were graduates from London, literates from King's College, sandy-haired youths from Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and from where else in the name of Providence we do not know, eligible for membership in the case of University Clubs, we should at once have elements of civilization so heterogeneous and multiform as absolutely to destroy that oneness and harmony of tone which now makes a University Club the pleasant resort it is. Very likely there is a difference between the social demeanour of Oxford and of Cambridge men discernible to the moral connoisseur, just as Juvenal informed us that there were epicures in his day who could tell at once the particular sea in which the oyster that they tasted was caught. And just as we have ourselves heard one or two well-known *bons vivants* pronounce off-hand whether a

particular salmon came from the Severn, the Parret, the Shannon, or the Tweed. But the discrepancy in breeding, noticeable in the University man who hails from the Isis or the Cam, especially after a few years of attrition with the world, is infinitesimal, while even allowing it to be as great as enthusiasts would maintain, the fact that the elements of variety are only two, diminishes its importance to zero.

From this it is not difficult to surmise why and how the Public School Clubs which have at various times been started in London have, without an exception, failed. Into the theory of Public School types we shall not at present enter. It is sufficient to notice that their timely and essential differences have militated against anything like the social assimilation which is the first requisite of club life. These differences may be merged and disappear altogether on the common ground of a University, on which the majority of public school boys eventually figure. But in the case of the Public School Clubs, which we have in our eye, the levelling hand of University education has not been passed over the bulk of their members—and members who without exception are extremely young. Hence they have been disturbed by a perpetual conflict of interests and ideas. There has been no harmony of action, no pulling together; while the *vexata quæstio* that has perpetually arisen, as to who should be the sole monopolists of the phrase “public school men,” has created a feeling of antipathy from without which has been reflected in the disorganization and the disaffection within.

The hardest thing that can be said of a club on the one hand is, that it is a class club ; the worst thing that can be said of it on the other is, that it is without some definite and appreciable attraction of cohesion. To the curse of class clubs we shall have occasion to revert ; upon the indispensability of the latter principle, we have already insisted at sufficient length. It is the blessing of a well-managed University Club that it is exempt from either of the stigmas that we have here specified ; while as for the qualifications for membership on the part of candidates, it may in a measure be said that they have to submit to two distinct preliminary tests. Not only is there the ordeal of the ballot, but we know, before that stage has been arrived at, they will have passed through the socially harmonizing course of Oxford or Cambridge.

Let us take our first specimen of a University Club. If it is desired to select an instance of one of these institutions very closely approximating to an ideal of perfection, commend us to the Old University Club at the corner of Suffolk Street, Pall Mall ; of its kind, we have not the slightest hesitation in saying that it is simply the very best in London—perfectly appointed in every respect and eminently comfortable. No idle and discomposing display of the superfluous pomps and vanities of club life ; nothing of that glitter of novelty which may make a club quite as disagreeable as the pair of boots which the maker has just sent home ; a perfect absence of all attempt at silly ostentation, of sham, of unrealitv—a marked deficiency in

fact of all those Brummagem features which find favour in this age of electro-plate ; solidity and reality everywhere ; no veneer of splendour thinly disguising a deep substratum of discomfort ; rooms of just the desirable size, equipped and furnished with every object that the soul or body of man could desire ; couches which invite one to rest as surely as did ever the murmur of Shenstone's bees to sleep ; arm-chairs which seem the embodiment of some dream-conceived idea of luxurious abandonment ; small tables—how often have we seen the finish of an otherwise well-equipped apartment utterly spoiled by the absence of these—scattered at judicious intervals over the rich and soundless carpets of the various rooms : these are amongst the main characteristics of the Old University Club. Then, let us look at the attendance. Club waiters, as every one knows who has but a moderate experience of this race of beings, are of many kinds. There is the perky waiter—the aristocratic waiter—the clever waiter—the superciliously submissive waiter—the obtrusively obsequious, and the familiarly suggestive. There is the intelligent waiter who does not know his place, and the intelligent waiter who does ; the stupid waiter, admitting of a precisely identical subdivision ; the Young England or Democratic waiter ; the Old England or Conservative waiter, respectful, intelligent, steady-going, and ready. Now it is not too much to say that the menials of the Old University Club belong almost exclusively to the last class. In a word, to complete this business of description,

the Old University Club is pre-eminently for genuine comfort, for unpretentious luxury, for perfect management, for wines, in which the most implicit confidence may be placed, for good dinners and equally good society, a very ideal of an establishment.

Let us have a look at the members. We must select a favourable period for our visit—neither too early nor too late in the London season. Perhaps the month of May is as eligible as any other. We will lounge in there, if you please, late in the afternoon, and should the reader see no just ground of objection in this arrangement, we will take the day of the week to be Wednesday. In reference to a felicitous usage, the House is of course up, as the hour is already ten minutes past six. Whom have we in the morning-room? Well, there are representatives, and no insignificant representatives either, of almost all our nineteenth-century professions. We have seen in this apartment before now some of England's most celebrated divines, judges, barristers, and authors. Very likely the same phenomena are to be observed at the Athenæum, —a select haunt that we shall visit in due time; but there is this difference between the aspect which such celebrities wear at the Athenæum and at the Old University,—unbended dignity, stiff and starched, stern and relentless, is the main characteristic of the former; there is a certain grace of freedom which prevails at the latter.

If the intelligent reader who, we hope not for the last time, is our companion, will look yonder, he will see a

sight that should rejoice him. He is gazing indeed upon no bishop, no judge, not even a senator, but upon a member of a race of men who in their time have done quite as much as any other class in the community to raise the standard of English social civilization, and to elevate the tone of English converse and manners—to vindicate the true dignity of the Church, and to strengthen the hold which it has upon the affections of the English people. Let us speak with the respect we feel of him to whom these remarks are dedicated—he deserves both it and them. The Rev. Charles Merton belongs to a race which is fast becoming extinct—to the race of Englishmen, clergymen who are moreover English squires and scholars to boot ; we say not English gentlemen simply, because it ought to be understood that that attribute is or ought to be comprehended by the term of clergyman. The Rev. Charles Merton is in a high degree a typical member of the Old University Club. In the first place, he is an Old University man ; he was at Oxford when Oxford meant a good deal more than it means unfortunately now ; he graduated before the century was in its teens ; he gained a first class, and was subsequently fellow and tutor of his college—Balliol, just at the time when Balliol was first commencing to earn for itself a name and fame. A few years later still, in his career, Mr. Merton took orders. He had fixed his colours and he stuck to them ; they were those of a Constitutional churchman. His fellowship gave him a title, and two years later he left Oxford.

A modest competence which then fell to his lot made him independent of his profession, so far as income was concerned. He was still young, not eight-and-twenty. He determined to give himself two or three years before he settled down to the active work of the holy calling which he had adopted. An admirable sportsman, a first-rate rider — Mr. Merton in his day was accounted one of the best men at timber that the shires ever knew—and a capital shot, he devoted some little space of time to the pastures of Leicestershire and to the Highlands of Scotland. His habitual companion was his cousin, the Hon. Arthur Henley, whose tutor he had been at Balliol, and over whom he never failed to exercise an unceasing influence of the very best kind. During this period Mr. Merton naturally extended an acquaintance already of considerable latitude. He was in fact known everywhere; and wherever he was known he was respected. But his aims were higher than those of pleasure. The living of Singleton, in Berkshire, falling vacant, he received the offer of it from his cousin already mentioned, accepted it, and settled down to the routine of the country-parson's life. Previously he had married his kinswoman, the Hon. Miss Henley. From that time to the present his life has been one of continued usefulness. Only twice has he been absent from a Sunday service at Singleton during all those years, and as he is now eighty, the significance of that remark need not be dwelt upon. Yes, the Rev. Charles Merton has already passed the tenth annual limit

beyond the period which the psalmist has fixed as the *Ultima Thule* of ordinary human existence. Still is he fresh and hale, hearty and strong ; a little bent, perhaps, and somewhat deaf, but yet endowed with as keen a sense of the sweets of existence as ever. Ask him whence this marvellous preservation ? He will tell you, "I am well, sir, and, thank God, pretty strong, because I did not abuse the vigour of my youth ; because I steered clear of all these atheistic and republican movements which are now afloat ; and because, always taking as much fresh air as I could get, I seldom failed to drink a pint of port at dinner." To our mind, and to the mind of many others, young and old, there is no companion more pleasant than that old gentleman yonder. He will take an interest in anything and everything ; is full of common remembrances for those who are more nearly his contemporaries in age, and overflows with information and anecdote for those who are young. In his parish he is simply venerated. Even now he is an indefatigable visitor at the houses of the poor, never without a word of kindly greeting to all ; a great upholder of open-air exercises of every kind, on the right and reasonable ground that they afford a proper and healthy outlet for the energy of youth, and himself occasionally seen on his old Irish mare in the hunting-field. Who can gauge the good which such men do ? Who over-estimate the beneficial effects of their presence and their countenance ?

In his day Mr. Merton has met with every one. He

used to belong to two other well-known clubs in addition to the University; but as his friends died off—and friends have a way of doing this when one nears one's twentieth lustrum—they ceased to charm him, and he withdrew his name. To the Old University, as one of those who first brought the club into being, he still adheres. Even from the list of members of this it cannot be long before death blots his name out, and the cosy armchair which he occupies in the nook of one of the windows looking out into Pall Mall knows him no more. He is in London only for a couple of days on family business, yet those few days he enjoys. To-morrow he will be off again, and next Sunday will assuredly see him at his accustomed post in his church.

There are other members of the clerical profession present besides the Rev. Charles Merton. Young, middle-aged, and old; some of them, as he is, in town only on a brief and passing visit, and valuing the club mainly as an agreeable rendezvous for meeting old friends, and college cronies; others, fixtures in the metropolis, and therefore more regular *habitués*. That gentleman yonder, an obvious clergyman, judging him by the not infallible test of costume in these days, whose years are perhaps five-and thirty, with the tall erect figure and the dark and earnest brow, is pronounced to be by those who are knowing in such matters, one of the most rising ecclesiastics of the day. Two years since he was appointed to one of the most populous and responsible parishes in the East End as its rector. Since he has been located there

his life has been one perpetual battle against the influences of evil—one continued protest on the side of the good. At present he is engaged in talking to a gentleman of a very different order of mind and aspirations from himself—a member of Parliament for one of the western counties; a persistent optimist, who finds it the most comfortable plan to believe in the better side of the world without endeavouring to discover the worse, or habitually playing the part of a moral detective; a Tory of the good old school; the embodiment, in fact, of one's ideal of an English country gentleman. The Rev. Octavius Kennard is endeavouring to impress upon the not very receptive mind of the senator the necessity of bringing before Parliament certain facts connected with the profundity of the social and moral degradation which is every day thrust upon his eyes. Can nothing, he wants to know, be done? Is the great body of the nation idly to look on the while and let these things be? Mr. Blandwell looks grave, admits the exceedingly painful nature of the facts, and suggests that Mr. Kennard should mention what he has just communicated to him (Mr. Blandwell) to one of the metropolitan members, and then diverts the conversation to some other theme; asks the young clergyman how his father—his old college friend—is; whether the pheasant coverts are good at Bortwell this year, and how he likes his new rectory house? Mr. Blandwell belongs, emphatically, to the old generation; Mr. Kennard represents some of the most energetic tendencies of the new. Mr. Blandwell considers

his young friend, as he calls him, a most deserving young man, but would be better pleased if he would get some of those new-fangled ideas out of his head. Mr. Kennard regards Mr. Blandwell as the incarnation of that particular form of selfishness which is apt to be generated by an absence of family and domestic cares, three thousand a-year, a beautiful place in the country, a taste for the good things of this life, a deep-seated conviction of the moral excellence of the present game laws, and of the acme of bliss obtainable by all those who deserve it under the existing order of things.

Mr. Blandwell is, in his way, a representative member of the University Club—a typical instance of that numerous class of country gentlemen who spend, perhaps, four months out of the twelve in London; who, though they may be mixed up with political life, feel acutely the boredom of a club that is supposed to be primarily recruited from St. Stephen's, and like a haunt of a more miscellaneous description, where they can see other faces than those which they can discern any evening on either side of the House. The politicians who are to be found at the Old University are, with few exceptions, Conservatives, firm believers in the fact that if they give their votes regularly on any important division, are tolerably punctual in their attendance at committees, and receive periodically deputations of their constituents in town, they have fulfilled the highest measure of their duties. As a rule these gentlemen do not go to the trouble of taking a house in town.

They find that chambers in the same thoroughfare, at the corner of which stands this their favourite resort, suit them best, and as a consequence one side of Suffolk Street may be almost said to be monopolized by statesmen of this pleasant easy-going order. Their mode of life is that of clockwork. Enter the Old University Club at half-past nine in the morning, and you will find the coffee-room contains a fair number of them chipping the initial egg, with 'The Times' unfolded on the spotless damask cloth at their side. *Dies pulchro distinguitur ordine rerum.* Then there is the morning's walk in the Park; then committees at the House; then the dinner if possible at the club; and then probably the House again. Walk in again to the club on Saturday and Sunday, and you will, we venture to say, search in vain for any of these gentlemen. A Sabbath in London is in their eyes an abomination. They either run down to their own country-estates to see how matters are getting on: whether the keepers are properly looking after the birds; whether the cattle, which they purpose exhibiting at the next agricultural show, are progressing satisfactorily; and what are the prospects of their tenants' crops: or else they find it convenient to visit some married son or daughter, who inhabits "a pleasant villa close to the banks of sinuous Thames." A very nice idea, indeed, of the comforts of this life have these middle-aged Conservative M.P.'s to whom the reader has been introduced at the Old University Club.

But there is abundance of young life and fresh blood at this admirably planned and immaculately conducted establishment. You may notice plenty of young barristers who stroll in when chambers and the courts are done with ; not a few young soldiers, and a very fair sprinkling of young gentlemen, much courted by diplomatic mammas, with more leisure time on their hands than they know how profitably to employ, and balances sufficiently large at their bankers to induce the judicious parents above mentioned to think that it would be better divided between two than monopolized by one.

Or seek this institution about the time when the Oxford and Cambridge boat-race is in the course of celebration, or later in the year when the University cricket match, or the Eton and Harrow, have crammed Lord's Ground with superb carriages, and breezy dresses, light-blue and dark-blue, to say nothing of a host of other colours not inferior to the multitudinous tints of the rainbow in brilliance or variety ; then you may witness the ingress of a numerous and a novel element into the penetralia of the club. There are masters from Eton and Harrow, fellows of colleges from Oxford and Cambridge, young clergymen and old from all quarters of England ; the contingent of country squires is seriously reinforced, and the strain that is put upon the capacities of the room, the resources of the kitchen, and the good humour of the cook, is not to be spoken of lightly. If you are desirous of entertaining a friend here at such a period as this, it is advisable that

you should order your dinner the day before it is required ; otherwise, so abundantly is the hospitality of the club at these seasons dispensed, you may run a considerable risk of every inch of sitting room being preoccupied. Then is the time for those cheery reunions which are certainly not less pleasant to the general spectator than to those who actually participate in them ; for our national greetings and the agreeable interchange of good wishes which are more than mere words.

Who would deny the unquestionable influence for good that such an institution as this must have upon the complicated network of our modern life ? Who would say that the mere fact of there existing such a common ground as this upon which members of all professions, and of a variety of social orders, may perpetually meet each other as associates and equals does not constitute one of the most wholesome and strong of those connecting links which bind together the different sections and members of this diversely composed and heterogeneous body politic of ours ? To a certain extent this is the function and chief advantage of all clubs : in a special degree, and for the seasons which we have already mentioned, does it constitute the advantage and the function of the Old University.

As for other University Clubs, we must treat of them in a separate chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

UNIVERSITY CLUBS.

General character of the Oxford and Cambridge Club — In the Library — Professor Higgins — Mr. Elwell — Predominance of the Legal Element — Mr. Sprightly Ballast — University Life naturally leads up to Club Life — The New University Club — Mr. Christopher Prig — Episode of Mr. Marmion Weatherby — The Undergraduate at the Club and the Undergraduate in Town.

THE air of intense comfort which impresses you so strongly on entering the Old University Club, you miss to a very great extent when you have stepped inside the lobby of the Oxford and Cambridge. In an architectural point of view, this latter and more recently erected institution is in every way a superior institution to its senior relative. The frieze which decorates the exterior is, in its way, one of the most perfect things in London : and the appearance of the whole frontage is in an eminent degree what we believe guide-books are in the habit of calling "elegant." Inside you are met by a really fine staircase, and with the exception of the strangers' dining-room, which is one of the most dingy and miserable apartments into which one was ever compelled to insult a friend by asking him to enter, the apartments are all of them well designed and well fitted up. The library is

probably next to that possessed by the Athenæum—quite the finest of which any club in London can boast. Hence it is that it forms a feature in the establishment, and that if one wishes to notice not the least important or characteristic side of the life which goes on inside these walls, one must ascend to this judiciously arranged chamber, covered, as to its walls, with its exceedingly beautiful bookshelves of variegated Russian birchwood.

That gentleman who is engaged in poring over some half-dozen folios, each of which occupies his attention in turn, is professor of Economics and Finance at a certain obscure University. By the conditions attached to his tenure of office he is bound to give not less than half-a-dozen lectures each term; and with the preparation of one of these he is now busy. Professor Higgins—let us call him Higgins—is in his own estimation destined to become an eminent financial reformer, and the theme which now occupies his mind is the possibility of some new invention which may entirely supplant the necessity of a metallic basis for the currency. Till the University condescended to notice his merits, and the eminent qualifications possessed by him for the post which he occupies, there seemed a considerable likelihood of Mr. Higgins' talents remaining in a state of concealment. A master at a public school during the earlier portion of his life, he suddenly conceived a violent attachment for a study of the subject which Adam Smith first formulated into a genuine science. The immediate results of this

devotion were eminently satisfactory ; for Mr. Higgins gave further proof of his aptitude for politico-economical speculations by engaging first the heart and then the hand of a wealthy and moderately young widow. Having thus exhibited the genuine financial powers latent within him, Mr. Higgins threw up his undermastership and took a house in London. Here he induced certain editors of newspapers and magazines to insert various articles developing his lucubrations on sundry economical and financial questions ; and eventually his scientific Quixotism earned him quite a name amongst a certain section of that world known indifferently as literary and thoughtful. Mr. Higgins gave good dinners, was undeniably amusing, diligently cultivated the acquaintance of all those whom he thought likely to advance his views, and, finally, surprised the world, not so very long since, when the post of Professor of Economics and Finance at ——— became vacant, by offering himself as a candidate. The ex-professor was eligible for re-election, and was in many ways admirably adapted for the office ; but having assiduously cultivated the rôle of the revolutionist during the last few years, he had earned for himself a very serious measure of unpopularity. Mr. Higgins' cause was pleaded with energy and ability by his friends : and the result was that, after a contest in which the whole residuum of angry academical feelings and bitter partizanship was stirred up, this gentleman, somewhat to the surprise of himself and his friends, was duly declared the possessor of the much-

coveted chair. Almost any morning, since that date, from twelve to five, the professor—if you wish to fondle his vanity be sure you give him the full benefit of his title—is a safe find in the library of the Oxford and Cambridge Club. It is from there that he dates those powerful letters which he is in the habit of sending to the papers; and it is there, as we see him busied in doing now, that he arms himself with those facts and arguments upon which, buried in the seclusion of his own library at home, he will base theories that will effect a revolution in all the financial systems of Europe.

In this age of incurious dilettantism earnestness of any kind is a great thing, and it needs only a passing look at Professor Higgins to see how intensely earnest he is. From the pages that are before him he uplifts not his eyes—will not look either to the left or the right. He is exceedingly short-sighted, so that his head is quite invisible, being literally buried in his book. There is only one contingency which will divert his attention momentarily even from his studies. Let but one word be spoken in the room, and he will turn round quickly in his chair, and, singling out the offender, will ask him whether he has observed the printed notice suspended from the wall, which “particularly requests silence in the library.”

Professor Higgins is not the only constant *habitué* of the library of the Oxford and Cambridge Club. It is sedulously cultivated by advocates of all ages, by young men of no particular profession, whose ambition it is, at

the cost of a few hours' daily study, to gain a reputation for erudition and intellect; and in fact, at one time or another, more or less by the rank and file of the institution. But there is another standing dish quite as regular and more time-honoured than Professor Higgins—Mr. James Elwell. If you look among the list you will see, after the name of this gentleman, the letters O. M.—original member. Among these Mr. Elwell was one of the earliest who came forward. Many, curious, and conflicting are the stories current to account for the nature of the life which he leads. Every morning, at ten precisely, this gentleman enters the club. He never fails to find waiting his arrival one cup of tea already poured out and mixed, accompanied by one slice of toast. With the ungainly speed of the man who has but little time to lose, Mr. Elwell deposits his angular form on a chair, completes the repast which constitutes his breakfast, and straightway betakes himself to the reading-room. Two hours, neither more nor less, are consumed in gathering the news of the day from the different journals that lie scattered on the table. And punctually as the clock strikes twelve Mr. Elwell mounts the stairs that lead into the library. There he remains till two. At two he disappears entirely from the club—where, no one knows: at six he reappears—whence, no one knows. Another hour is given to the evening prints; then comes dinner—say three quarters of an hour for that—and Mr. Elwell is once again in the library. At eleven he quits the club for the

night. His exact address no one is able for a certainty to allege. There is a rumour that he has chambers somewhere in the Adelphi; in the opinion of others, it is believed that he is unhappily married, that he still lives *en famille*, and that his nights are spent at a small house in the neighbourhood of Notting Hill. According to another account, he takes charge of an aged mother, who is lunatic and bedridden; while, if any credence is to be placed in what a fourth section of gossips aver, Mr. Elwell spends his afternoons in the City and his nights in the Temple. All that is known of him for a certainty is this: that his hours at the club are such as we have described them here: that when in the library, the literature which he peruses is either Arabic or German—very seldom English; that from the few remarks which he has been known to drop, his learning must be considerable; that he was at one time a fellow of his college, Exeter, Oxford; but that as the continuance of this endowment depended on his taking orders, and its holder announced his determination not to submit himself to the bishop's examining chaplain, Mr. Elwell, at the expiration of seven years, was compelled to throw up this source of income. In point of age Mr. Elwell must now be nearer sixty than fifty; in point of figure, he is tall, with just that curvature of back which an incessantly sedentary life begets: and as to face, as much of a riddle that cannot be read as was ever the visage of the Egyptian sphinx. Such is Mr. James Elwell. Some clubs in London have votaries not less

punctual : some have them almost as enigmatical ; but from all other mysteries Mr. James Elwell stands entirely apart.

So renowned and so various are the contents of the Oxford and Cambridge library, that you may often see, in the apartment which we have described, more than one well-known barrister, searching for legal precedents amongst the volumes on its separate shelves, instead of inquiring for that purpose in the somewhat dingy bibliothecal chambers of Lincoln's Inn or the Temple. Young Sprightly Ballast—who is pronounced by the *cognoscenti* to be fast making his way to the summit of legal pre-eminence—is quite indefatigable in his attendance—one of those gentlemen who never are unpleasantly met with the fact that there is a certain process of digestion, through which their physical natures must pass, and during which it is advisable to suspend all severe mental exertion. Sprightly Ballast is able to leave his table in the coffee-room, at which he has partaken of a frugal but nutritious meal, and to transplant himself straightway to the region of the library upstairs. A strong cup of tea is all the factitious stimulus which he requires ; and the works of recondite authorities upon subtle questions of law seem to furnish him with that degree of placid satisfaction which is communicated to mankind in general only through the medium of a post-prandial cigar.

But attractive though its precincts are, we must quit this chamber dedicated to the sacred purposes of books and book-worms. We will contemplate from a more

general standpoint the aspect of the ordinary current of social life at the Oxford and Cambridge Club.

It will, we hope, be apparent to the most uninitiated of readers, from what has been previously said, that most clubs in London—all those which may be regarded as representative clubs—have certain special features of their own, and to be seen respectively to their best advantage must severally be visited at different periods of the day. Thus there are clubs which are pre-eminently dining clubs: clubs which, to be understood, demand attendance at an hour when the world in general is supposed to be gone fast asleep: clubs celebrated in a special degree for the resources of their library or the comforts of their smoking-room: for the genius of their *chef*, or for the eligible nature of their whist. In the case of the establishment about which we must linger yet a little longer, if it is required to form an accurate idea of those who mainly compose its active members, you could choose no better time to wander into the reading-room than any day between the hours of 5.30 and 7.30 P.M. Glance round the various occupants of the chamber, and you will at once discover that the strictly professional element is largely represented—in other words, that a very considerable majority out of those present belong by no means to the order of those the object of whose life it is to pursue pleasure as a business, but to the class of active workmen in various polite and liberal avocations. The Oxford and Cambridge Club has, in fact, gained the reputation of

being to a very considerable degree a barristers' and solicitors' house of call ; and it is not, perhaps, too much to say that out of those who are here on the present occasion, at least three-fourths pass their everyday existence in the immediate neighbourhood of the Temple and Chancery Lane. A person who cannot tell a moderately successful London lawyer almost upon the first glance will never constitute a sound judge of human nature. On the same principle, presumably, that the appearance of the human handwriting is affected by the special course of mental and general training to which the writer submits, an identity of professions tends also to impart an identity of facial expression to the human countenance. In respect of the marked contraction of the muscles above the eyes, and the drawn look which is to be noticed in the regions of the mouth, the race of solicitors and advocates is respectively readily discernible all the world over ; for the truth of which assertion we would but refer the intelligent and observant spectator to the generic resemblance and family likeness visible in the countenances of those gentlemen who throng the room, in which we are, just now. Of course, these are not the only sides of our English life depicted in the reading-room of the Oxford and Cambridge Club. There is a fair sprinkling of country clergymen and of rural squires ; there is a stray author or two ; not impossibly a second-rate poet or so, and very likely an occasional pillar of English trade. But there is strikingly little in the general effect which this

social conglomeration leaves upon your mind to call up to your memory the scene with which you met at the Old University Club in Suffolk Street. Why this difference between the two kindred associations should exist we are not competent to say; whence it should be that in the case of the elder association not the slightest resemblance of anything like a class institution is betrayed, while in that of the junior there is such a strong predominance of what may be called strictly professional interests, we are quite unable to pronounce. As accurate photographers of men and manners, we can only give record to the fact, and an undoubted fact it is. From top to bottom, from reading-room and library to smoking-room and billiard-room, the Oxford and Cambridge is pervaded by a very perceptible flavour of what is vulgarly known as "shop." And the "shop" is legal "shop." Men chatter it over their cigars after dinner, and prattle it between the interval of their strokes at pool. As for the desirability of the custom, it resolves itself merely into a question of individual taste.

The demand for clubs has grown to be indefinite and insatiable. And, after all, this is only what might have been expected, and for a very simple reason. It has become a recognized truth, or generally accepted necessity, that every profession, calling, and interest should be supplemented by its club; consequently, as the ranks of the various professions are closed up and their members increase to overflowing, an exactly corresponding strain is made upon the capacities of clubs and their premises. On this ground

it is that it has been found necessary to affiliate new social establishments to those which at a period when the pressure from without was less severe, and the struggle for existence less keen, amply sufficed to supply the social necessities of different avocations. Thus there is a Junior Carlton as well as the original Carlton, a Junior United in addition to the Senior United, an old and a young City Club, a whole host of military clubs, of various degrees of standing; and in consequence of the tenfold increased facility offered to every one of obtaining an education at Oxford and Cambridge, in these latter times, a new University Club, established for the purpose of receiving into its capacious bosom the overflowings of the academical clubs which we have already visited. Indeed, into the University Club in Suffolk Street an entrance can only be effected after long years of patient waiting; and though vacancies in the community of the Oxford and Cambridge may be less infrequent, they by no means occur rapidly enough to supply the very extensive demand on the part of young gentlemen from Oxford and Cambridge for the enjoyments of club life in London. We believe, too, that we are guilty of no exaggeration of the facts that were a fourth well-conducted University Club established in an eligible situation in London to-morrow, it would receive a plentiful allowance of applicants for membership before the present year of grace is out.

It is not difficult to account for this phenomenon, or to say why it is that probably next to those who belong to

one or other of the two services, the most numerous class of the representatives of club life must be said to be drawn from the Universities. In the first place, as year after year passes, the attractive and absorbing power of the metropolis is more strongly developed and increased; the percentage of young men fresh from Oxford and Cambridge who throng up to London with their degree just taken, and with the bloom of academic existence still upon them, is undeniably much greater now than it was ten or five years ago; and at this rate it will probably continue to be enlarged. In the second place, the kind of previous life which these young gentlemen have led is exactly of the kind to make them keenly desire and feverishly appreciate the luxuries and blessings of a club. Most likely a very fair proportion of them have already served a kind of apprenticeship to club life at the University; have lounged in the rooms which the societies of members of our different great schools, when at Oxford or Cambridge, are in the habit of hiring, for the special purpose of preserving the unity and continuity of their traditions handed down from the old school days. To such institutions as these we shall have occasion to introduce the reader later on in this volume. The newly-fledged graduate, with visions before him of the pleasant scenes of social intercourse in the midst of which his lot has for the last four years been cast, and with the sound of familiar voices yet ringing in his ears, is plunged into the centre of London, there to find his level and his com-

panionship with much the same feelings as if he were abandoned by his comrades in the middle of the Great Sahara. De Quincey is not the only person who has discovered the fact that the desolation of London solitude is the intensest and most absolute which there can be. To the young Oxonian or Cantab, club life, as an antidote to the abomination of this loneliness, is eagerly caught at; and if the club be one the tone and habit of whose members, if not their actual faces, are from his previous experiences more or less familiar to him, the enjoyment and the relief are all the greater. Such a club as this he discovers in that which we are now about to visit—the New University Club, in St. James's.

A very capital building is this, and singularly appropriate, as regards its appearance and design, for the purposes to which it is dedicated. The passer-by can scarcely fail to be struck by a certain academical tone which seems to pervade the exterior. The arms of the various colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, sculptured with great accuracy and clearness, at once proclaim the nature of the building; and the Gothic windows, with their very elegantly fashioned pillars on either side, remind one strongly of the recent additions to Christ Church or Balliol. And the arrangements inside are characterized by a corresponding and commensurate regard for comfort and effect. An indefinable air of elegance, sufficient to satisfy the most fastidious tastes of young Oxford and Cambridge, presides indeed over the whole establishment.

And to young Oxford and Cambridge the establishment is strictly dedicated. We do not mean to say that the presence *rugarum et instantis senectæ* constitutes a bar-sinister to the election of any aspirant for the honour of membership. There is a sprinkling of seniors and of grey hairs even in this assemblage of youth. Occasionally you may come across an almost white-headed college "Don," a middle-aged clergyman from the country, or a middle-aged barrister. For instance, does not that most superior being, Christopher Prig, of the Inner Temple, whose years are not removed by many more than five or six from the completion of the first half-century of his existence, belong to the society of the New University Club? It is true that Prig would have preferred the old, original institution, at the corner of Suffolk Street, but none of his acquaintances who belonged there ever seemed especially to care about proposing him; while as for the Oxford and Cambridge, Prig is so universally detested by all his legal brothers, who form a majority of its electing committee, that he always knew perfectly well his name only had to be mentioned as that of an intending member to ensure his being "pilled" with the severest punctuality. So Christopher Prig has fallen back upon the New University Club. Amongst other little tastes of this gentleman comes that of proselytizing; and as the members whom Prig meets at this club are for the most part considerably his juniors, it is a real pleasure to him to endeavour to gain converts to the particular creed which

he holds in religion and in politics. If Prig's ancestry could be traced, it would be found that his progenitors were exceedingly plebeian in point of origin, and rank deserters in respect of faith—facts which are, of course, quite sufficient to ensure that Prig himself is, as a politician, a Tory of the old exploded type, and as a churchman belongs to the time-honoured order of the High-and-Dry Constitutional dogmatists. Prig, who is in reality a dull creature and a very commonplace dog indeed, graduated at Oxford some twenty years since. By dint of marvellous industry he absolutely achieved the distinction of a first-class in the classical schools ; and of course on the strength of this triumph he has never failed since to arrogate to himself an air of infallibility. Subsequently to his degree he went the regular rounds of unsuccessful candidates for fellowships ; for the common rooms of Oxford not merely found that Prig in point of ability was several inches below high-water mark, but scarcely relished the prospect of having to listen to his inveterate prosing, whilst they were discussing daily their post-prandial port. Prig then determined to come to London, and to read diligently for the bar. In due time he was called ; but, as might have been expected, he remained briefless. Still plodding, the patient Prig contrived to get some employment on a minor provincial newspaper—a species of promotion which ultimately led to still greater results, for by degrees Prig achieved the highest object of his ambition, and absolutely figured as an independent author. Since that

time his estimate of his own abilities, and the simply loathsome conceit of his demeanour, have known no limits. It is true he is a mere hack, getting in a review here, and a leading article there; complimented by the member for Little Biddington as having done wonders in the line of party journalism, but beyond this receiving no recognition whatever: perpetually hanging about political clubs to see what early intelligence he can pick up, in order that he may telegraph it off to one of the three or four country newspapers with which he is connected: manœuvring and intriguing for invitations to aristocratic assemblies; endeavouring to puff himself into notoriety by the championship of some statesman *in extremis*: in fact, struggling in a hundred ways to make his mark, yet in reality not making it at all. Prig, however, is deeply possessed of the idea that his calling is a noble one, and full of this conviction he works away. He is a pedant and a bore, and the very embodiment of his name. Young Oxford may be—often is—conceited, silly, affected, flip-pant, and vain; but the conceit, the silliness, and the vanity of young Oxford are as nothing when compared with the intolerable pedantry and the insufferable arrogance of middle-aged Oxford, as illustrated by Mr. Christopher Prig.

Let us take an instance of another member of this society, essentially different in every respect from the specimen which we have just selected. Almost any day that you enter the New University Club you will come

across more than one of the pleasant stamp, of Mr. Louis Hardwick—young men, genial and industrious, to whom the institution supplies precisely that element in London existence which serves pleasantly to keep alive the memories and association of college days. After four or five hours' work in chambers, or confinement within the precincts of some Government office, it is a genuine relief for young gentlemen of this stamp to turn their footsteps westward, and entering their luxurious retreat in St. James's Street, to be certain of coming across old friends and associates with whose gossip they can agreeably diversify the otherwise monotonous pursuit of wading through the evening journals. Were it not for the existence of the New University Club, it may indeed be questioned whether Mr. Marmion Weatherby would have been able to support the year's residence in London to which he actually submitted, and which happened in this wise. Having gained a fellowship at All Souls', Oxford, that most pleasant of academical clubs, for nothing more in reality can this college—with its foundation consisting of forty fellows, two chaplains, and, with the exception of four bible clerks, no undergraduates at all—be considered, Mr. Weatherby, whose years were only three-and-twenty, whose honours in the law and modern history department were of the highest, and whose popularity as a "coach" in these subjects with the junior members of the University was great, determined that he would quit Oxford for London, in order to obtain his call to the bar, and if

possible eventually to start life as an advocate in the modern Babylon. But this gentleman very soon found out that the metropolis was by no means to his taste. He had got unfortunately completely into the groove of University life, no easy groove by-the-by, when one has once fairly settled to it, to get out of. Moreover Mr. Weatherby's groove was of the pleasantest. His rooms in All Souls' were perfection. He thoroughly enjoyed the dinners at that *recherché* and select high table with its luxurious carpet of the richest Turkey fabric spread below, to say nothing of the subsequent accompaniment of claret of the rarest vintage, varied by the occasional glass of more than unexceptionable port in the cosy common room. He was a favourite on all sides, and his society was diligently sought after. His private pupils, independently of his fellowship, brought him in a snug little income, and the work which he did was just enough to impart an additional relish to the sweets, and they were not a few, of existence, without destroying his capacity for the enjoyment of pleasure. Marmion Weatherby was very much the reverse of a book-worm. Fellow and private tutor though he was, he rode regularly with the drag, kept a couple of hunters, and contrived to get, during the season at least, one day a-week with George Drake's hounds or the old Berkshire. As for his pilgrimage to London, he had never regarded it as a pleasure, but as a duty; the time had now come when he thought it ought no longer to be deferred. Before quitting his beloved Oxford he

had obtained an *entrée* into the New University Club, and the only moderately enjoyable hours which he could spend in town must, he speedily discovered, be passed within the precincts of that establishment. There he at least had an opportunity of meeting with faces which he knew, and of hearing voices with whose tones he was familiar, of inhaling a social atmosphere that was not entirely alien from that which he had breathed during the last six years of his life, and was not loaded with what he used to stigmatize as the "fetid odour of London slang." But even thus Mr. Weatherby, though he attempted to conceal the fact from himself as long as possible, soon began to be ineffably disgusted with his new life. By degrees he grew moody and melancholy. As for invitations to dinner he steadily refused them all. Punctually at five o'clock every day he used to enter his club, and there, in one mode or another, he obstinately whiled away the time till eleven, at which hour he would sullenly depart to bed. Marmion Weatherby was in truth quite as homesick in his way as any school-boy who has recently experienced the horrors of Black Monday. The brightness went out of his eye, and the elasticity was no longer visible in his step. He complained that he could get no open-air exercise. It was to no purpose that his friends suggested the Row. "Call that riding," said Marmion with a sneer, thinking the while of the green pastures of Oxfordshire and the open wolds of Berks. Well, then, there was the Thames; why not scull from Hammersmith to Richmond? "Yes,"

said Marmion Weatherby, "and be in perpetual danger of being run down by a crew of infernal cockneys. No, thank you, the club suits me better." So life passed with this gentleman for upwards of a year ; and the doleful demeanour and desponding countenance of Mr. Weatherby fast earned a fame for themselves at the New University Club. But when the second October came round, Marmion suddenly disappeared from the club altogether ; he had given up his chambers ; and the hall-porter had directions to forward all Mr. Weatherby's letters to him at All Souls'. Marmion Weatherby had in fact bolted. He could stand this sort of thing no longer, and had determined not without much deliberation, that having sought for rest and found none in London, he would return whence he had come, and pitch once more his tent beneath the classic shade of St. Mary's. There is many and many a University man in London who, though not carrying matters to the extreme point of Mr. Marmion Weatherby, regards his club as the one great solace of his metropolitan life.'

For all these reasons there attaches a peculiar and exclusive degree of interest to the social phenomena of the New University Club. And if you care about visiting the establishment at the period of the inter-academical boat-race or cricket-match, you will meet with a whole host of additional proofs of the complex nature of its composition. It is at these seasons that the undergraduate element makes its presence manifest. The proportion of

undergraduate members is, it is true, even now small, and in the course of time will naturally decrease, till at last it disappears altogether. But as regularly as Easter or June comes round, the knots of enthusiastic young men collected in the various apartments, talking in accents perhaps somewhat louder than those to which the voice of the habitual club man is attuned, fresh and eager, irrepressible in spirits, full of laughter, and rash in speculation, are facts which testify beyond a doubt to its existence, and on the whole not unpleasantly. It would be a highly desirable thing if these young gentlemen would mark, learn, and inwardly digest the lessons in the amenities of life which a few hours passed in a good club are calculated to teach. It would tend very materially to elevate the estimation in which he is popularly held out of doors for display of breeding and show of courtesy, if the undergraduate in London would remember to practise, when he is at large in places of public metropolitan resort, the social precepts which club life might be supposed to instil into him. As it is, there is no denying the fact that the undergraduate in London is a singularly unpleasant fact, and one which is in a marked degree uncomplimentary to the good influences of *Alma Mater* considered as a social instructress. Happily there are numerous exceptions, but unfortunately it is the majority of instances which determines the human judgment. And as for undergraduates as a class, when they resort to London on the occasion of any of the great academical saturnalia, such as the boat-race or the

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cricket-match, vulgar proclivities are the prevailing characteristics of their conduct. The licence which, in deference to a pernicious and senseless custom, is conceded them by the mistakenly good-natured proprietor of Evans' supper-rooms, they appear to think they have a right to expect from the bulk of metropolitan residents. We should very much like M. Texier or M. Assolant to try their descriptive powers on the scene to be witnessed at Mr. Green's well-known restaurant in Covent Garden on the eve of the boat-race. It is one upon which they might fairly let them run wild without much danger of being betrayed into groundless exaggeration. The spacious hall literally crammed with some hundreds of lads, its walls denuded of all those portraits and paintings which in more ordinary and placid times grace them ; the stage, usually tenanted by a line of glee-singing choristers, wholly yielded up to the impulsive representatives of young Oxford and Cambridge ; lights burning low ; chandeliers carefully hauled up just high enough to suggest the idea of their being made aims for walking-sticks, or plates, or any other species of projectile that may come conveniently to hand ; a waving of hats and pocket-handkerchiefs, a profuse display of ribbons and rosettes of dark and light blue ; a perfect storm of voices hysterically shrieking out the names of the two great English Universities in the shrillest accent they can muster ; these are the most prominent of the sights and sounds which, in the general Babel and chaos that meet him, will arrest the

attention of the observant stranger. The atmosphere is oppressive ; he has been deluded into paying precisely five times the ordinary charge for admission at the door ; there is scarcely a waiter to be seen ; chops or kidneys, or anything else in the way of solid refreshment, there is none to be had ; if, after much waiting, he succeeds in obtaining his sherry-and-seltzer, or heavier and more potent mixture, as the case may be, he has some difficulty in finding time and space in which to dispose of it, so violently and demonstratively do the University youngsters round him assert their claim to ubiquity in the matter of standing-room. These are the facts of the case ; and if they do not make the stranger, whether he be Continental or British, walk away mentally execrating the aquatic metropolitan saturnalia and asking him for what conceivable reason the venerable proprietor of the historical "Evans'" can suffer his usually peaceful and commodious haunt to be transformed into a pandemonium of boyish shouting, the epithet of "inquiring" will be altogether out of place.

Something closely analogous to the ineradicable passion which possesses the Briton the moment he has once set his foot upon Continental soil, "to burst all links of habit, setting habit's self aside," and frantically to break loose from all those restraints which a sense of conventional decorum and propriety imposes on him on his native side of the Channel, inspires the breast of the aberrant undergraduate as soon as he finds himself

thrown in the midst of "the nation of London." In his University he may be a quiet, gentlemanly young fellow enough ; once place him in London, and you will see that he has entirely cast off all loyalty for those social laws and those regulations of academical etiquette which in Oxford or Cambridge are of paramount importance ; that he has temporarily developed into a creature of noisy exuberance of spirits, not much less of a nuisance than the cad of the music-hall. For instance, let us look at Smith, a good fellow enough doubtless, quiet enough, and thoroughly the gentleman within the precincts of his own University. What is Smith in town ? We will suppose, if you please, that he has just taken up his station in one of the stalls at the Princess's to witness the 'Colleen Bawn,' or the 'Streets of London.' The undergraduate mind delights in such stock-pieces. Half-a-dozen places to his left he spies, we will imagine, Dashville, who, by-the-by, is with some ladies. At Oxford, Smith's acquaintance with Dashville is little enough. Now, holiday licence may be good enough in its proper place ; but our undergraduate might remember that between the gallery set apart for his accommodation on the day of the *Encaenia* in the theatre at Oxford and the stalls dedicated to the general public in a theatre in London there exists not the slightest analogy whatever.

We have been guilty of this digression here because the subject is one in which our University men need admonition. If the existence of such an institution as the New

University Club in St. James's Street, by establishing something like a definite and generally acknowledged standard of propriety in the art of public demeanour, should serve to check these unseemly excesses on the part of several hundred young Englishmen, it will have conferred a real benefit both on society and them.

CHAPTER XII.

LITERARY CLUBS—THE ATHENÆUM.

The Ideal of Literary Clubs—Literary Conversation—Its position, and causes of that position at the present day—Indifference of *Littérateurs* to Literary Talk—"Thought Snatchers" of the day—Composition of the Athenæum—Its position—Mr. Fossille—Fuddleton Potts—Dr. Filper—Reminiscences of Theodore Hook.

IF it were only possible to realize the popular ideal of a literary club, it may fairly be said that it would satisfy every requisite of social perfection. The fancy picture which the imagination draws of a society of gentlemen, all of them distinguished in some degree in the paths of literature, science, or art, bound together in their leisure moments by a purely intellectual link; finding their highest enjoyment in delicate contests of exquisite wit, flashing forth by the process of mutual attrition *mots* that sparkle, epigrams that sting, and aphorisms upon which humbler beings might base the conduct of a lifetime; puns rattling like a hailstorm; words of humour and of wisdom lavished with the profusion that is born of mental opulence—what, indeed, can be more entirely charming than this? Disillusion and disenchantment can never be particularly

pleasant. The results of German philosophical research may be received as a personal injury and insult by the credulously sentimental scholar. To have one's belief, cherished religiously from one's schooldays, in the real existence of a Romulus or a Numa, utterly subverted by the solvent arguments of a Mommsen ; to be told that heroes, a reverence for whom one has imbibed with one's earliest lessons in Roman history, as flesh and blood warriors and reformers, are but mere abstractions, invested only by the illiterate thoughtlessness of the vulgar with a material being : all this is naturally felt as a kind of robbery committed upon one's stock of mental goods and intellectual knowledge ; a wanton and unnecessary contraction of the sphere of human interest and sympathy.

Disillusion, however, is one of the laws of life ; and it may be as well at once to entreat those readers who fondly entertain any such idea as we have suggested of literary club life in the present day to abandon it at once—sternly and remorselessly to pluck it from the place it has long occupied in their hearts. Attic salt is not a commodity which is to be purchased at so much per pound ; and the Attic salt which used to season the banquets of a past generation of the giants of literature and art has somehow become extinct. We seem to have lost the track of its discovery and the receipt for its manufacture. It is a fact on which we have already had occasion to comment, that conversation, as an art, seems in these latter times to be relegated to that same circle whither we have already

dispatched the epic as a species of popular literature, and the poetical drama as an object of popular amusement. We talk in these days, but we do not converse. The period has passed when the actual antitype to the club which the genius of Addison fabled was possible ; the age has gone by when Swift, Harley, Pope, Arbuthnot, and Gay filled with Amœbean eloquence the chambers of the Scriblerus. Johnson, Burke, Reynolds, Goldsmith, and Fox ; club men will never talk again as did these in their periodical meetings at the Essex Head. Sheridan was not a development which we can expect in this present year of grace. Theodore Hook has faded away : even the place of men who lived at a date so comparatively recent as Hood, Jerrold, à Beckett, is now vacant. We repeat, whether it be in the drawing-room or the club, conversation of the old kind is one of the forgotten arts.

“And now,” said Warrington to Pendennis, as they walked home by moonlight after their dinner at Mr. Bungay’s, “that you have seen the men of letters, tell me was I far wrong in saying that there are thousands of people in this town who don’t write books who are to the full as clever and as intellectual as those who do ?”

In this wise does Thackeray make one of the truest, if one of the roughest, of his heroes speak. The great novelist himself well knew the entire applicability of his remarks : “It may be whispered,” he continues, “to those uninitiated people who are anxious to know the habits and make the acquaintance of men of letters, that there are

no race of people who talk about books or perhaps, who read books so little, as literary men."

But whence, it may be asked, has come this change over the spirit of literary society? How is it that the tone of the literary clubs of the present day differs thus immensely from the tone of precisely the same institutions as they existed not a quarter of a century ago? *Scire vere est per causas scire*; and without stopping to examine the disputed point how far Aristotle was right in insisting on the apodeictic nature of science, we shall at any rate accord our practical testimony to the Baconian aphorism, by endeavouring so far as we can to state not merely the phenomena, but the causes, or at any rate the conditions, of this social declension or social change.

As regards the disappearance of the recognized conversational prince and autocrat, whether it be from the regions of the drawing-room or the club, we see in it very little to regret. Mankind is not made up of Boswells, and a Johnson *redivivus* would be voted a consummate bore. We have, in fact, established a conversational democracy, have transferred the government of talk from an oligarchy to a Commons, and have bade farewell for ever to the Venetian constitution of intellectual rhetoric; pass an evening with our friend Eglinton Conyers, who possesses considerable merit as a talker, and a liberal allowance of native wit; the only drawback about his society is that he insists on keeping the game entirely to himself; you make frantic efforts but you cannot get your

oar in. If Eglinton is in the vein for, as his friends profanely call it, "jaw," what power shall stop him? It is in every way a consummation for which we ought to be truly thankful, that the various currents of public opinion have in this matter met, and that the result of their conflux is the social annihilation of the monopolist of talk. The tendency of modern life is towards equality: we see it even in the discoveries of human science and skill. The invention of printing may be considered to have taken the first step towards the equalization of knowledge; that of gunpowder has certainly reduced all varying degrees of physical strength to a par; locomotion by steam, and the electric wire are fast proving themselves superior to the petty distinctions which have been created by space and time. Equality is the spirit of the age, and anything which is in direct opposition to this mysterious abstraction is pronounced unhesitatingly to be in emphatically bad taste. As the youth of the period—we shudder almost as we use the odious phrase—tersely puts it, it is not "good form." The unanimous abolition of this habit of conversational monopoly is but a protest exactly in keeping with our social movements in other directions. Incidentally, it may be one of the concomitant results of this same movement to have banished variety in great measure from the precincts of refined life and well-bred circles, and to have established one unvarying standard of monotonous social uniformity. We dress like one another, we talk like one another, and presumably we think like one another. It is

bad style to do anything which savours of peculiarity ; it is bad style to do anything which can point to you as a focus of comment and attraction ; it is bad style, nay, it is downright vulgarity, to use language in an ordinary sense for any other purpose than the concealment of your thoughts. If you wish to be anybody, you must be exactly as other bodies are. Now it is certainly one of the results of this unwritten social law, that it checks anything like the free play of verbal expression, which is the indispensable accompaniment, the *primum mobile*, the soul and the essence of witty, amusing, or instructive talk. Certain subjects of conversation are prescribed for you by the code of social ethics ; and these are the subjects which you must take up, whether they be the prospects of rain or the chances of a dissolution. Banish spontaneity, and farewell to wit.

These comments are indifferently applicable to the changed aspect of society, and the changed aspect of literary clubs from a conversational point of view. In the case of the latter additional reasons might be adduced for the social metamorphosis. The account which the author of the ' Republic ' has given of the gradual corruption of states, and the nature of the transition from one form of government to another, might, with the requisite change, be closely parodied in the compilation of the annals of clubs. Integrity of purpose is an element which in a very short space of time rapidly dies out club life. Clubs which have been started for one special purpose, or for the delec-

tation and benefit of one particular class of men, speedily prove false to the original purity of their design. Either it happens that the class which it was expected would furnish an adequate succession of recruits does not prove equal to the strain of a constant supply ; or else the members of such a club grow weary of themselves, disgusted with the pervading odour of sameness and shop, and long for the introduction of some foreign element ; or else the institution as an institution acquires such a celebrity as to inspire outsiders with an ambition of forcing their way into it, and of exerting their influence to gain the honour of admission beneath the shadow of some respected name. It is this last which has acted as the one great disturbing cause in the composition of modern literary clubs. Neither the Athenæum nor the Garrick, as we shall presently show, to say nothing of the minor institutions which will subsequently receive our attention, can be said at this moment at all to fulfil the original designs of their founders. People are talking a good deal just now about the necessity for the revision of educational endowments. We would suggest in the interest of such clubs as those to which we allude a closely similar step. Men who will talk, and talk wittily and well, among themselves will decline to do so amongst strangers. Had this feature of promiscuity been observable in the club haunts of Johnson and Burke, the brilliant utterances of their social rhetoric would not have been on record. If a club ceases to be strictly literary, scientific, and artistic, and becomes a

resort of fashion, it is an absurdity to go to it in the expectation of hearing better things than can be heard any day at the Carlton, at Arthur's, or the Wyndham. And in these days a good writer or a clever painter can usually command such an income as will enable himself to spend his leisure moments as a gentleman at large. His industry is of no half-hearted description ; it is not wonderful if he is glad to doff entirely for the moment the recollection that he is a man of genius—or of talent we would rather say, seeing the existing paucity of this attribute—and as such supposed to occupy a conversational standpoint superior to the level of the majority of his fellow-creatures.

And this brings us to another point, which it behoves us not to pass by unnoticed. This is an age of unprecedentedly rapid production, as in everything, so assuredly in literature and art. Multiform Momus, Esq., for instance, is something more than a literary man—why should we not add an Index Expurgatorius to the English language, and utterly eliminate that detestable phrase?—he is a man of letters ; he is also one of the most successful of his class. His income, derived solely from the work of his hands and the sweat of his brow, is considerable, as it needs be, for his expenses are great. He can, and on an emergency will, do any kind of work—provided the remuneration is satisfactory : for Momus holds the healthy and orthodox belief, that the workman is punctually worthy of his hire. Momus's brain is perpetually being flagellated for new ideas. Either he wants to

hit on a novel vein of epigram and plot for his next work ; or he is thinking about some desirable situation for the end of the second act in his forthcoming comedy ; or he wishes to suggest an original line of policy for the Government in the article which he has to write for the next number of the 'Edinburgh ;' or he might get some eligible subject for that series of magazine papers which he has entered under an engagement to do by Christmas. Multiform Momus is only a fair specimen of many other representatives of the class to which he belongs—incessantly busy and incessantly productive. Whether this condition of things may be one of Utopian desirability is nothing to the point. We have here only to accept actualities and to beware of trifling with the facts. But this, and more too, does Momus do. He seldom works less than seven or eight hours a-day at his desk at home. When he goes to his club, the Garrick, if you like, is it strange if he feels but little disposition to give utterance to repeated strings of those epigrams and *mots* which the author of 'Sooner or Later,' in his brilliant but ridiculously unreal pictures of literary club life, represents as forming the staple of conversation in the smoking-room of that moderately famous institution. If, as he plays with the newspaper, or chats with his friend, or sips his tea, or exhales the blue smoke of his cigar, eminently happy thoughts occur to Momus, or gentlemen in Momus's position, he and they would feel far more disposed to reserve them for his or their next novel-chapter, or next magazine article.

Momus also happens to know—a fact, by-the-by, of which our readers should not be ignorant—that most so-called literary clubs are infested by a class of men whom, for want of a better name, we may call thought-snatchers—hucksters in ideas, ignoble appropriators of stolen conceptions, excrescences upon the tree of literature, parasites, old men of the sea, or whatever else you choose to call them, who make it their great business to pilfer the brains of others, to build their bricks out of their neighbour's clay, who are in a perpetual condition of social ambush—always ready to pounce down upon any good thing which your lips may happen to drop, and to transfer it, without so much as by your leave or with your leave, to the pages of their own miserable and ephemeral effusions. There is honour amongst thieves—there is little enough of it amongst a certain order of literary men. Hence one of the reasons why, as a contemporary sociologist has observed, when a man has really something to say he keeps it to himself, and that when he has nothing to communicate he imparts it to his friends.

Of all professedly literary clubs in London, the Athenæum is that which claims a priority of attention, and for more reasons than one. Not merely may its prestige be considered to overshadow that of any other institution with which it is generically associated, but the date of its establishment is chronologically anterior also. Numerically it is one of the largest that we have; it is always full to overflowing; and it will illustrate in a tolerably

marked manner the inevitable declension from its original design or profession, a feature which, as we have said, sooner or later characterizes the majority of class clubs.

Are you a country clergyman, and wish when in London to have an interview with your diocesan? The reverend spiritual lord will ask you most probably to call upon him at the Athenæum. Do you wish to ask some illustrious legal luminary of whom you know something, a question or two? You will find him at the Athenæum. Is it necessary for you to see Sir Peregrine Lumley, the well-known chairman of Social Science meetings, and the president of who shall say how many intellectual societies of various descriptions, you will probably have to await the pleasure of this pompous big-wig in the lobby of the Athenæum. To belong indeed to the Athenæum is considered to confer a certain amount of *status*, an unknown measure of distinction on whoever is fortunate enough to attain that honour. It numbers amongst its 1200 members a large proportion of the most eminent persons in the land. There you will find taking their very lettered ease indeed, in the reading-room or library, in elegant and select profusion, members of either House of Parliament, great luminaries of the bar, possibly a prince of the blood royal, sages, professors of all the topics known or knowable by the intellect of man, illustrious authors, pioneers of modern science, gentlemen in fact of every conceivable calling and profession, who inspired by a desire to achieve some kind of distinction, or at any rate some species of apology for

it, have managed to thrust themselves into the Athenæum, and now that that step is consummated, mistake it for a career. It is thus plain that the only thing which can pretend to be specifically and solely intellectual about the establishment is its name. It is an absurdity to talk of a purely literary club, which numbers nearly one thousand and a quarter of a hundred members.

How did all this occur? In the simplest and most intelligible manner in the world. Like rumour the Athenæum commenced from exiguous beginnings, and like rumour it gradually grew. Its head was lifted high; its name was noised about, and it was visited with the questionable blessing of world-wide celebrity. To belong to the Athenæum was the correct thing. Its founders were men of note, and they each had a large following of admirers. A club in its youth is easily accessible, and, it having entered into the heads of the originators of this now magnificent palace that they would live in state, new members were not merely obtainable but indispensable. First came a splendid contingent of the episcopal interest. Who has not heard Lord Alvanley's reply to the question whether he still remained a member of a club, which since that date has become extinct, the Alfred—"Not exactly; I stood it as long as I could, but when the seventeenth bishop was proposed, I gave in. I really could not enter the place without being reminded of my catechism." This irruption of prelates had, however, no such deterrent effect in the case of the Athenæum. Indeed, the number

of applicants for membership increased, on the contrary, in a manner entirely out of proportion to all precedent. The idea of being able one moment to talk ecclesiastical politics with a great spiritual lord ; the next, to be lost in laughter at the jokes of "that dear Theodore;" at one time to be discussing high art to Sir Thomas Lawrence; at another, diplomacy to men like the Earl of Aberdeen, marvellously took the public fancy. In the words of a modern writer on this theme, the result was that "all the little crawlers and parasites and gentility hunters from all corners of London set out upon the creep, and they crept in at the windows, and they crept down the area-steps, and they crept in unseen at the doors, and they crept in under bishops' sleeves, and they crept in by peers' pockets, and they were blown in by the winds of chance." The Athenæum retains its celebrity, as it always will. We are a nation determinately tenacious of names, and as indefatigable as we are unreasonable in our respect for them. It is upon its name and upon its reputation that the Athenæum lives.

If you go to call on a friend at this famous club, you must be on the very best manners that you can muster. The chances are he will keep you waiting in the hall for half-an-hour before he comes down to see you; but then that is a way of impressing you with the dignity of his position. If you talk in a tone above a whisper, he will hush you into silence. And who, after all, is your friend? Perhaps such an one as Mr. Fossille. What is he? A

prosperous merchant. What are his tastes? You had better ask his head-clerk, or his head-cook; for his principal ideas of life are resolvable into two words—business and dinner, and the latter assuredly comprehends the first. Nevertheless, Fossille is a member of the Athenæum, has been for many years, and has just entered his son's name—ætat fifteen—down, who by the time he is thirty-five will have perhaps a chance of figuring where his father has figured before him, and the wish of Fossille senior will have been accomplished, for next to himself the excellent gentleman venerates the Athenæum Club—the structure and the name alike—more than anything else. And yet some of his younger and more flippant friends are profane enough to talk about “that old snob Fossille with his perpetual jaw about the Athenæum, as if it was the only club in London which a gentleman could enter.” Most clubs have their Fossilles, but owing to the peculiarity of its composition and its assumption of intellectual moment, the Athenæum is not a little rich in these particular developments.

The atmosphere of dignity which pervades the interior is almost funereal. If a friend shows you over the establishment, you will notice that the stillness which reigns throughout all the rooms is broken by nothing save the crisp sound of paper, or the swift scratching of pens. The waiters seem haunted by an abiding sense of the dull majesty of the situation, moving slowly and with a meditative air. Your Mentor allows you to put your nose and

eyes through the library entrance, and in a deep tone of voice informs you that if you look to the right you will see the Bishop of Loamshire reading; or if to the left, an ex-Lord Chancellor; that that gentleman yonder is Mr. Fuddleton Potts, who anticipates the honour of knighthood for his late political work; that there sits Dr. Filper, the editor of learned volumes and treatises innumerable, but the writer of none. You will perhaps also be informed that Dr. Filper is the sole conductor of a certain well-known journal, which was once—some years ago now, it is true—the most famous in the world. You are not much impressed by his visage, and his presence generally suggests itself to you as contemptible. If you are given to speculation, you are disposed to wonder how it is that the review in question, the hereditary vindicator, the once most brilliant of all brilliant political periodicals, should have come into the hands of a man whose learning is that of the mechanics' institute, whose religion is that of little Bethel, and whose politics are those of the trades' unions. If those historically venerable covers were allowed the luxury of an ejaculation, their expression would probably be something to the same effect.

The Athenæum is a magnificent institution, but you are not sorry to leave its precincts. Your friend would possibly ask you to dinner, but there is no accommodation for strangers. Nothing can exceed the splendour of the dimensions of the dining apartment, but as you look

round it, and are pointed out the corner where the author of 'Gilbert Gurney' used to sit at his by no means scanty meal, keeping the occupants of surrounding tables in a roar, you in vain—such is the nature of influences immediately present—endeavour to recall the tone in which he would have asked for another glass of toast and water; this said non-exhilaratory nomenclature being Hookeian for *eau-de-vie* compounded with as limited an allowance of the first monosyllable of the phrase as the intelligent menial might please to administer.

These days are all gone by with the glory of them. The Athenæum is, and will continue to be, the recognized head of literary clubs; it will still count amongst its members names of the highest eminence in the land, and will still remain the architectural embodiment of genius, talent, erudition, dullness, and ignorance, reduced to the same decorous level of social uniformity by the overwhelming force of an equalizing etiquette. This is in the nature of things; as we have already explained; it is the inevitable corollary of the conditions subject to which we conduct our social intercourse at the present day; it is peculiarly so, as we have also shown, of the method in which the Athenæum has gained its prestige, and in which it has lost the true colouring of its originally professed purpose.

CHAPTER XIII.

LITERARY CLUBS—THE GARRICK.

The Garrick — The name remarkable — Why — Position of Actors and Theatrical Art — Corruption of Literary Clubs — Alien elements in the Garrick — Mr. Flitchley — Hon. Captain Nincompoop — Flimsy Phlitter — Order of the day at the Garrick — Lunch — Mr. Carmichael — Mr. Thomas Vesey — Mr. First Principles — Mr. Quince — Mr. Henry Golightly — Mr. Grizzly — Mr. Cynical Suave.

THE different gradations of style and splendour in literary club life are quite as striking and numerous in their way as the series of brilliant vicissitudes which go towards completing the popular conception of the existence of the literary man. We have seen him now, if not actually arrayed in purple and fine linen, still occupying a pinnacle of social dignity, as member of the Athenæum, the very mention of which is a passport to prestige—the companion of nobles and of bishops, of great diplomatists and of powerful politicians. But we have only witnessed a small segment—nay, an infinitesimal fraction—of the real working literary life of London, of that society whose name is legion, which influences the thoughts of the present as it may possibly mould the minds of the coming generation. The process by which what is known as public

opinion is formed is a curious and interesting theme of speculation. Whatever be the degree of insignificance attached to the part discharged in the task by the manufacturers of periodical literature, there is no reason to suppose that newspapers and magazines are wholly devoid of all creative influences. Without, therefore, going into the question now, whether people in general derive most of their accepted and common notions through the medium of books or ephemeral and topical writing, or whether, as Socrates maintained, question and answer are the safest means of eliciting truth, and habits of oral discussion and friendly conversation build up the greater part of the fabric of public opinion, we may at any rate conclude that there is no just reason for limiting our investigation into literary club life to the precincts of the Athenæum. Grave essayists of the highest type and established writers on philosophy and history do not exhaust the representatives of the active literary life of London; and it is from the former order that the purely literary contingent of the Athenæum Club is mainly derived.

It is a somewhat remarkable fact that the title of the most essentially literary club in London—the Garrick—should be taken from the name of a man who, lettered though himself he was, belonged to a class which is beyond a question, as a rule, the most unlettered that ever ventured to claim relationship with the arts. With exceptions so few that they might almost be counted on

one's fingers, the actors and actresses of the present day are of all living human beings the most essentially ignorant, empty, and vain. Brilliant exceptions are here and there to be met with, but the vividness of the force with which their very brilliancy is felt conclusively proves the validity of the rule. In nineteen cases out of twenty not an actor on the stage has received the education or is imbued with the instincts of a gentleman: has the slightest tinge of literature or scholarship. And yet persons wonder why the stage has reached its present pitch of decadence. The stage simply means its representatives. We have instanced the qualifications of these: can we wonder at the result?

Once give a profession a bad name, and it will very nearly share the fate of the proverbial dog. In itself the actor's art is one of the noblest, as it is also one of the most satisfactory to the artist. It is one of the noblest, because it is one of the most genuine and sincere. The grounds upon which Plato banished writers of fiction from his ideal state will readily occur to the reader. It was not merely because they created emotions dishonourable and weakening to manhood: it was because also their fictions were a species of *trita idola*—thrice removed from the veritable truth, because, as depicitors of scenes and sentiments which did not exist, they were the lovers and the workers of a lie. Now the true actor is not open to impeachment on this ground; what he represents, that for the time being he is. But to realize

this indispensable requirement for true histrionic art, there are two things necessary : first, there must be the requisite nature, and under this head must be ranked not merely the possession of certain physical qualifications, but a highly strong and subtly organized temperament, such as that which every poet has ; in the second place, the gifts which nature has supplied, education must train and develop. Of these conditions the majority of our modern stage-strutters have neither.

The actor's art is eminently satisfactory, simply because all arts being satisfactory in proportion to the opportunity afforded to the artist of witnessing the depth of the effect he produces, the actor can enjoy this pleasure in a very singular degree. The author has no immediate knowledge of the amount of power which his writings exercise. True, when the knowledge comes, as in time it does come, to the Carlyles and Tennysons of the earth, the reward is great ; but what is the suspense endured while awaiting the consummation of the desire. With the actor, however, all this is different. In the space of a moment he thrills a vast assemblage into sympathy with himself, causes to rise tears from the well-springs of the heart, or elicits a laughter which is the music of the soul. The actor stands in the same light to the poet as the orator does to the author. But these speculations are as idle as they are digressive, because at present we are out of the way of artists, and are obliged to put up with mimics. We shall have the opportunity of making the acquaint-

ance of some of these, not in this chapter, but later on, and we sincerely hope that the reader will be grateful to us for the trouble of the introduction.

We have said that the Garrick is the most purely literary club in London—the one which most fairly represents, from a social point of view, the better order of active and industrious workers at the vast intellectual web of writing that is being spun out in these days of fearfully rapid progress. And we believe that those of our readers who are authorized to speak on such matters will bear us out in supporting the justness of our claim. That an alien and heterogeneous element should have been introduced into this institution is simply inevitable. That if you spend an evening in the smoking-room, you will meet a number of gentlemen who have no earthly connection with science, literature, or fine arts, is only what must have been expected. But, at any rate, this may be said, that the element has not been introduced in such large quantities or with such a total absence of all restriction as entirely to swamp and wash out the true features of the club. To a certain extent respect is still paid, in deference perhaps to the memory of Thackeray, to the qualification which must be possessed by each candidate for admission. Of course there are ways innumerable of evading this qualification. You may get some friend to put after your name “artistic sympathies and descent”—vague enough in all conscience—or “artistic sympathies” merely, which is vaguer still: or simply request him to

inscribe the one word "literary," on the strength that you fancy yourself fond of literary society, or "artistic" for an analogous reason: or if you have ever written an article or even a letter for a third-rate newspaper, you may consider yourself justified in arrogating to yourself the dignity of "journalist," or if you have ever contributed a middle article for the 'Snarler,' what objection is there to your claiming one of the distinctive titles of Lord Macaulay, and christening yourself an essayist? The only thing is that it rests with the committee to satisfy themselves that none of these mild stratagems are resorted to. It is to be wished that their duties were more conscientiously discharged. Spurious qualifications are, in the case of clubs, precisely what faggot votes are in the case of politics.

The most conspicuously alien elements in the composition of the Garrick Club are the military and the commercial. Gallant and dashing young officers from Chatham and Aldershot are particularly fond of the Garrick—"devilish good place to dine at—meet plenty of literary men, you know—capital fellows, and monstrous amusing." City potentates are not behindhand in their *penchant*. Probably the reason is that, conscious of their own ignorance and, in most matters removed beyond the walls of their own offices, their intellectual crassness, they have an idea that the elements of education and the rudimentary forms of culture can be communicated to them by the process of attrition against those who are

in possession of the desired goods. On the same principle, we believe, there are certain old ladies who are in the habit of preserving farthings in the midst of sovereigns, in the sanguine anticipation that by this subtle process of alchemy the viler metal may be transmuted into the more precious gold. However, with some few exceptions, these *parvenus* are harmless. They know their place, and they realize the fact that they are where they are, to a certain extent, on sufferance.

On the other hand, we must honestly confess that old Flitchley—Flitchley, senior partner of the firm Flitchley, Flinker, and Co., 999, Coleman Street, City—is a decided nuisance. Flitchley, as ill-luck would have it, has or had a cousin who is or was on the committee, and who occasionally found it convenient to borrow of his City relative a casual fifty or stray hundred, and very much the reverse of convenient to repay the loan at the agreed date. We have no wish to pry into the cousinly arrangements of the pair. Flitchley chanced to express a wish one day to belong to the Garrick. The wish was promptly attended to. Flitchley was proposed—the usual qualifications in such cases, “artistic sympathies and descent.” “Fancy that, old girl!” Flitchley said to his wife when he saw his name duly entered in the book—and in the course of time elected. Flitchley is very regular in his attendance at the Garrick—dines there a great deal too often and a great deal too freely for his own good or for the satisfaction of his brother members. “Hang it!” said Flitchley,

who if he chose could wallow in gold, on his election, "I'll show these fellows what money can do." And the consequence is that this merchant-prince ransacks the Garrick cellars for the richest and rarest vintage, bullies the waiters, salutes every one whom he can salute with a hail-fellow-well-met air, and makes himself generally noisy and objectionable. The worst of it is that he is continually introducing friends to dine ; and if in traversing the lobbies or passages he chances to recognize a *littérateur* or artist of any degree of celebrity with whom he can claim acquaintance, he will insist on button-holing him, and introducing him to his friends. The result is that there is at this moment a pretty general conviction that for the future the Fritchley element must be punctually and vigilantly guarded against. Even Fritchley, however, occasionally amuses. Much as men dread his entrance into the smoking-room at night, with the flushed countenance, watery eye, distraught cravat, and profusion of manner which betoken that he supposes he is making himself extremely sociable, they still know it is quite on the cards that he may betray some ignorance which—for the space of one minute, or say two—will furnish the theme of a capital joke. Something of the sort occurred only the other day. Fritchley had been dining—dining very much indeed ; and according to his own account he had occupied the day with looking at some estate in Surrey which he contemplated purchasing. Nothing would prevent him from entering into a minute description of the house, its grounds, and

every conceivable detail. At last Flitchley grew eloquent. There were lakes, there were lawns, and "By heaven! sir," burst he out, "the mansion is reproached by most magnificent revenue of trees that I ever saw." We believe that there are two or three members of the Garrick who are wicked enough to say that Flitchley was the true and real original of the old gentleman who, when buying his books by the yard, and being asked by the vender how he would have them bound—in russia? is reported to have replied, "Russia! no; d—n Russia—have them bound in London." It is probable, however, that this anecdote fairly rests upon no adequate basis of facts, and may fairly be considered both mythical and calumnious.

Flitchley is, of course, only an extreme instance of his class—a *reductio ad absurdum* of his species: and we are disposed to think that neither Flitchley nor his tribe is as objectionable in its way as the order to which the Hon. Captain Percy Nincompoop belongs. It may be well to state at the outstart that the qualification on the strength of which the Hon. Percy managed to thrust himself into the Garrick was "artistic." Curious, but true. And it happened in this way: Captain Nincompoop, when he was on service somewhere in the midst of the Zulu Caffirs, felt the artistic spirit within him, which his friends had informed him he always possessed from a child, strongly stirred by the spectacle of some very magnificent cliffs. Nincompoop whipped out his pencil, and, sending home the sketch which he made, had the felicity to discover on

his return home that his trusty depositary had given it to an artist on wood, who, seizing the idea, transmogrified it into a picture for the 'Penny Pedler,' on which he then had an engagement. Now, if Nincompoop would only do as others of his order do, and hold his peace, he could be tolerated: but the Hon. Percy is noisy and ostentatious to a degree. His swagger is insufferable, or rather was: for since his membership of the Garrick, Captain Nincompoop has received a judicious series of snubs, which appear to have convinced him that this sort of thing won't do. *A propos* of the existence of members of the Nincompoop description in clubs such as the Garrick—and here let it be understood that our remarks are applicable to all societies which create for themselves a literary or intellectual *spécialité*—there is this much that we have to say. It is ill-bred, it is bad style, it is villanous form for these gentlemen to give themselves the airs they do, and to endeavour to create the effect after which they strive. But it is infinitely more discreditable to certain other gentlemen that Nincompoop and his comrades receive the encouragement that they do. Toadyism cannot, with one or two very signal exceptions, be said to be a vice of the literary men—we would rather call them "men of letters"—of the day. But unfortunately in all literary clubs where Nincompoops are to be found, there will also be found men who think that, in seeking their society and aping their airs, they are achieving a high standard of fashionable fastness: literary men we mean who, as was the

case with Congreve—to compare something despicably small with something great—aim after the reputation of men of the world in addition to the *prestige* of men of letters. Let us illustrate our meaning by an instance. Flimsy Phlitter is a member of the Garrick: in his own opinion a wit, in the opinion of every one else a fribble, if not a fool. He is one of that weak order of tenth-rate *litterati* who strive after antithesis, and then think they have perpetrated an epigram; who mistake a vulgar play on words for a real pun; who fancy they are humorous without knowing what humour means; and who, if you were to tell them that all true wit contains at least a grain of wisdom, would fancy they were saying a very good thing if they were to recommend you to refer to Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language. Whether it be that Phlitter married an expensive wife, with great notions of an establishment, or that he was once a reporter on an army paper, and so conceives himself to have imbibed something of the *esprit vraiment militaire*, we do not know; but Phlitter's manner—the creature is well on to the forties—is a cross between that of a beardless youngster from Sandhurst and a military tailor's foreman in Bond Street. To be seen habitually in the company of such men as Nincompoop is Phlitter's ambition: to run over great names which he has picked up second-hand from these cads—there is really no other name for them—constitutes in his idea the acme of felicitous fame. We do not mean to say that Phlitter is entirely destitute of

good points: the innocence with which he devoutly thinks that in consorting with Nincompoop and Co. he is really doing a good thing, implies an element of confident credulity in his nature which is not without its own mild charm. The worst thing that you can say about Phlitter is that he is a flunkified cad. And the poor fellow is in reality amply punished for his inane weakness by the ridicule into which his *penchants* are turned behind his back. Phlitter, whose income, by-the-by, is extremely limited, talks as if he had not merely a banker, but a balance, estates in each of the three kingdoms, and a shooting-box in the Carpathians. If it were not for this, Phlitter might perhaps only be an object of pity: as it is, he is one also of contempt. The Hon. Percy Nincompoop, who thinks Phlitter excellent amusement, has a capital story about him with which he periodically amuses his friends at the Raleigh. It runs in this way: we should like Phlitter to hear it.

“Curious fellows, some of these literary men are—think themselves gentlemen, by Jove, when they’re only confounded cads. Tell you a capital story about a fellow called Phlitter: great chum of mine, by-the-by, and no end of fun. Well, met Phlitter one day—Charley Jinks and I—somewhere in the Strand: struck me Phlitter had been drinking. However, he asked us to dine with him at his house, that night. Nothing to do, and so we went. Presently, as we walked down the Stand, Phlitter loitered behind for a minute or two: turned round, and saw him

emerge from Tucker's—know Tucker's?—place where they sell Devonshire cream and Welsh mutton, and that sort of thing. Thought at the time there was a curious bulging out in the region of Phlitter's pocket, but said nothing. Got to his crib, somewhere up in Camden Town. Knock, knock—Phlitter not allowed a latch-key, I suppose. Mrs. Phlitter came to the door, and husband introduced us with the air of a duke of the royal blood. Noticed a great deal of secret signalling between the two—Phlitter hurriedly pulled from out his pocket something of which I caught a glance, and looked monstrous like a leg of mutton. Mrs. Phlitter disappeared, and we walked into what Phlitter called his study. Presently we went up into the drawing-room: found Mrs. Phlitter there—dressed, and sitting as if she didn't know what a household meant. It was about six now. 'By-the-by, my dear,' suddenly exclaimed Phlitter, as if a new idea had struck him, 'Captain Nincompoop and Jinks dine here to-night.'

"'Indeed, my love,' was the reply. 'Well, I daresay the cook will send us up something for dinner. I fancy I ordered it as usual for half-past seven.'

"Most remarkable fact," Captain Nincompoop is in the habit of concluding this anecdote of the Phlitter *ménage*, "when we sat down to dinner the only meat on the table was a leg of Welsh mutton, which Mrs. Phlitter informed us they had received some days ago from Lord Alvanley."

But the curious thing is that Phlitter—who, moreover, prides himself on his acumen—fancies that this kind of thing goes down.

According to the account given in Mr. Shirley Brooks' extremely clever novel, 'Sooner or Later,' the Garrick, or as that gentleman, with an ingenious simplicity of disguise that does not go beyond the name, prefers to call it, the Octagon, is celebrated mainly for two things—the excellence of its dinner and the epigrammatic brilliance of its smoking-room conversation. We have already had occasion to express our fervent dissent from the pictures of club gossip, considered as one of the fine arts, which this entertaining novelist has presented to us. In real life the Ernest Dormers and the Mangles are few and far between: it would indeed be intolerable to the bulk of ordinarily gifted mankind if it were otherwise. It being our business here rather to photograph the facts of real life than to indulge in the gilded amenities of fancy, we shall allow Mr. Brooks undisputed control of the Garrick smoking-room, with its never-ceasing fusillades of *bons mots* and witticisms, and take a much less elevated standpoint.

Now, the Garrick is not to any very great extent a breakfast club. It has but few members who, as may be and is the case with other societies, regularly take all their meals within its walls, from eve to morn, from morn to dewy eve, who live and move in it, and have their being therein, and who find in it all the requisites for their career. In the main, the members of this society are busy

men. There is a certain amount of work which must be done before lunch, and then comes the same routine continuing till five or six. The Garrick begins to be populous about the latter hour. Look in at any time between that and two or three hours after midnight, and you may be certain that you will come across no symptoms of suspended animation. Even if you care about strolling in during the hours of lunch you will be sure to be brought face to face with some one you know, and you may be quite certain of finding a very fair sprinkling of gentlemen who belong to a class quite as important as the writers of books in the great economy of the literary world of London — representatives of the publishing interest. Lunch at the Garrick is emphatically a publisher's meal. The phenomenon is to be accounted for in one or two ways, perhaps. In the first place, the hour at which the repast is taken furnishes an agreeable break in a busy day, or comes just when that break is needed. In the second place, Covent Garden and its immediate vicinage are above all other spots in the metropolis expressly dedicated to the warehouses of the modern Sosii. Let the intelligent reader reckon how many great publishers' establishments, shops, and offices he can mention within five or ten minutes' walk of the Garrick Club. Again, the situation is emphatically convenient for purposes of business. It is the most central that could be discovered ; indeed, for this very reason it may be said to partake somewhat of the nature of a compromise between

the interests of commerce and of pleasure. To the ordinary club man no club can be really perfect that does not lie somewhere in that region which is bounded on the west by St. James's Street, and on the east by the extremity of Pall Mall.

It is the hour of luncheon, then, at the Garrick. Enter Mr. Carmichael with a hurried step and a somewhat distraught air; for the proportions of this gentleman's business are overwhelming. He has but little time to spare, and beats an anxious tattoo upon the table while waiting his chop. Every now and then Mr. Carmichael hurriedly pulls out his watch, replaces it in his waistcoat pocket, and pulls it out again; for the head of the first publishing firm in Hertford Street has every five minutes of the day mapped out for engagements. It is two now: in half-an-hour the frugal meal will have been discussed, and Mr. Carmichael will be boxed up in his private room once more; arranging with a well-known *savant* for a new edition of the Koran with original notes. Ten minutes after that the Dean of Greyfriars will be with him, talking over the plan of his new work on Buried Cities, which Mr. Carmichael is to publish. All the morning he has been seeing classical scholars from the Universities, well-known novelists, and essayists galore; for Mr. Carmichael, in addition to the hundreds of volumes which annually issue bearing the imprimatur of his firm, has, as most publishers by-the-by appear now to have, the onus of a monthly magazine upon him. The Garrick exactly

suits this gentleman ; but you will seldom see him here except at the hour that we have taken the liberty of intruding our company upon him. It is possible that he may look in again between four and six ; but the snug dinners, the *noctes cœnæque deum*—not a few of which are celebrated in the Garrick—know him not. Mr. Carmichael is the soul of method and the essence of punctuality. If you wish to meet him at dinner you must either go to his country villa, or else to the house of some Broad Church ecclesiastic, or liberal-minded and muscular Christian politician.

Come in again to the club a little later—say from four to seven—and you will have a chance of seeing some of the best-known and ablest magazinists and journalists in London. Walk up, if you will, in the library. That gentleman, seated at yonder table, with head intently bent over his paper, pen in hand, and very thoughtful, is Mr. Thomas Vesey. At this present moment he is engaged upon a leading article for the ‘People’s Banner,’ and an excellent production, when finished, you may be sure it will be : somewhat rough, perhaps, in point of style, but closely written and admirably reasoned ; for Mr. Vesey represents the pure intellect on that renowned journal, and does most of the thinking business on the establishment. Very likely you may notice in the same apartment young Mr. First Principles, who is accounted one of the most rising men of the day. It is generally admitted that First Principles has made his mark ; and

undoubtedly he is a very clever fellow indeed. First Principles possesses in an eminent degree an argumentative head: he is mighty as a champion of culture, and remorseless as a critic. He is the editor of the 'Pioneer,' and by universal consent fills that onerous post to perfection. He is perhaps the most prominent member of the new Young England school. Of course, he is a Radical—nay, a democrat—but then all these gentlemen are. He has imbibed his notions of philosophy from Mr. Mill, and his ideas of religion from Auguste Comte. The public at large know possibly but little of his name; but ask a publisher what he thinks of him: you will be told he is a fine fellow, and worth his weight in gold. Ask the philosopher of Great Cheyne Walk, and he will tell you that First Principles is emphatically the coming man of the day. A strong head, unlimited capacity of work, and an iron will, are the three things which have made First Principles. Throughout the whole of his life he has never been known to waste one hour. When he is not writing he is reading, and when he is not reading he is thinking. Mention his name to Mr. Beesly or Mr. Frederick Harrison, and they will murmur, *O utinam si sic omnes*, or words to that effect. There is no doubt about it—First Principles has a career. In a very few years time he will be in Parliament, and in a very few more he will constitute, with his inveterate habit of reducing every question that can possibly suggest itself to a purely intellectual basis, an unmistakably formidable

opponent to those old-fashioned enthusiasts who may be stupid enough still to stick by the tenets of what, we suppose, will have then proved an effete Conservatism. Is First Principles entirely consistent? Well, that depends, we suppose, on what consistency means. It will be remembered that when Reginald Random published a certain volume of poems, which created at the time no small measure of attention and counteraction, a most scathing critique of them appeared in the 'Knout.' That was the production of the pungent pen of First Principles. When, however, he undertook the editorship of the 'Pioneer,' there appeared in the very first number issued under his auspices a poem written by exactly that bard whose effusions F. P. only a few months since had condemned as odious and abominable—a prostitution of the poet's art, worthy the inspiration of Mabilie and Holywell Street.

A very excellent club for dining in every respect is this same Garrick, and much frequented for this purpose by some of the most eminent and not the least agreeable of our London men of letters and of art. Even if you lounge into the coffee-room as early as half-past four or five, you will probably find that in some instances the serious business of the Englishman's great meal—nay, rather the great meal of civilized mankind generally—has commenced, for the Garrick numbers amongst its members a fair sprinkling of actors, who, in deference to the abominable conventionalities of that dramatic usage which,

laying violent hands upon you, thrusts you into your *fau-teuil* just when you ought to be sipping your after-dinner claret, are compelled to be at the theatres which they respectively adorn at the normal hour for swallowing the first oyster or lifting the preliminary spoonful of soup to the mouth. Passing by Mr. Fusbos the tragedian, and one or two others, you will see at yonder table Mr. Quince, —without exception the most accomplished young actor and the most conscientious and tasteful artist of the day. Do you remember the part of the Earl of Paladin in Jack Pungent's comedy, 'The Town,' that wizened up, somnolent, studiously bland, and considerably henpecked old nobleman? Do you remember how exquisitely each little stroke and shadow in his character was brought out by the actor, whom all London on the occasion of that, almost his first appearance on the metropolitan boards, pronounced unanimously to have made his mark? Of course you do—that is, if you have seen it—and the actor who delighted you then is before you now. Or again, you have scarcely forgotten how charmed you were with the delineation of Sam Perry, as the sharp, perky, industrious mechanic, in Mr. Pungent's subsequently produced and capitally written play, 'Rank and File'? Of course not. Well, if you wish to see the gentleman who gave you that treat, only look yonder—there he is—Mr. Arthur Quince, in his natural costume and with his natural countenance, pleasantly chatting and hinting to the waiter that he has forgotten the Perier Jouet.

Cast your eye up the line of tables, and you will come across Mr. Henry Golightly. Not know him? Most certainly you do. Why, when your sides have been shaken till the breath has fairly left you bodily with convulsive merriment at the indescribably comic scenes in the buresque of the 'Nut Brown Made,' repeated that night for the four or five hundredth time, to whose all-prolific genius were you indebted for the pangs of laughter which you endured? To whom else, indeed, save to that of Mr. Harry Golightly—the most incorrigible of punsters, the most refined and accomplished of buffoons that the walls of the Garrick have ever known? Whose pen was it that produced that inimitable series of 'Felicitous Cogitations' which you devoured every Wednesday, as they appeared, with such eager zest and such punctuality, but that of Mr. Harry Golightly? And there that gentleman is as large as life—perhaps you may think that even that is not saying very much—before you. Mr. Golightly has an exceedingly just idea of what a dinner ought to be, and a very wholesome horror of the dyspeptic agonies which may ensue upon a hastily bolted repast. The consequence is that on those evenings on which he has a motive for being at a theatre at the commencement of a performance, he never fails to order his dinner judiciously early; a little wrinkle of his, which accounts for his presence in the coffee-room of the Garrick at an hour so unfashionably premature. Mr. Golightly is not alone; soup and solitude do not go well together; and whenever he dines at the Garrick

there is but little chance that he will ever have to put up with the latter of these inflictions, for there is not a more amusing companion in all London, as the laughter which rings round his table will testify, to say nothing of the evident pressure which the surrounding menials are exerting upon their risible nerves, than the author of the 'Nut Brown Made.'

We turn away, and as we are leaving the apartment we suddenly confront Mr. Grizzly, the novelist, who has just come in to order his dinner two hours hence—pleasantest of romance writers, and gruffest and roughest of conversationalists. Mr. Grizzly, so far both as money and fame go, is eminently one of the most successful men of the day. His books bring in immense sums, and his productive powers are unprecedentedly great. If there is any author in town who has reason to speak well of his profession, it is assuredly Mr. Grizzly. And yet if you lounge into the smoking-room three or four hours hence, you will find him occupied in conversation with a select circle of listeners, strenuously and almost malignantly decrying the novelist's "trade"—that is the word which Mr. Grizzly uses. Mr. Grizzly maintains that anybody can write a novel who chooses to try. He has a son he will tell you, and he means to bring him up to his own calling. How will he set about it? Well, he will call him into his study every morning at 7.30 A.M., give him the rough sketch of a plot, pens, paper, and ink, and tell him that he is not to stir from his seat for breakfast till he has com-

pleted so much manuscript to his Mr. Grizzly's satisfaction. It only remains to see whether the experiment is successful. But Mr. Grizzly is rather fond of talking in this manner, simply with an eye to effect, and as his friends will tell you, it is only now that he has become infected with the *cacoethes* of politics, that he finds it convenient to decry literature.

A very different person indeed from Mr. Grizzly is Mr. Cynical Suave, who is lounging at his ease in that very tempting armchair. Like Mr. Grizzly, Mr. Suave is a novelist, and a novelist of a very high order. His books are full of pretty comments, overflow with genuine epigrams, sting with their sarcasm, sparkle with vivacity, and fix irresistibly the most dull and lethargic of readers by the ingenious excellence of their plots. And, a very rare thing to find, Mr. Cynical Suave is in conversation much what his books are in literature. He is exceedingly amusing, very sharp, especially if you expose your flank to him by some heedless remark—apparently the soul of geniality and the quintessence of wit; just the sort of man that every one is certain to like immensely the first time of meeting; to like perhaps with moderation the second time; and cordially to detest the third. It is currently reported that Mr. Cynical Suave is not amenable to any of those sentiments which are generated by the virtue of charity; that he will be your very good friend one moment, and make a very good fool of you behind your back the next; that he is precisely the one man of all

others whom it is dangerous to convert into an enemy, and whom at the same time it is impossible to count upon as an ally.

But as it is not our intention to collect in these pages a portrait gallery for the benefit of the uninitiated though intelligent reader, and seeing that in this chapter an ample account has been given of the more salient features of club life at the Garrick, we will quit the pleasant smoking-room, and bid a very enjoyable evening to the various authors, artists, sages, men of science and men of pleasure, who are collected for the purpose of their private and uninterrupted delectation within these snug walls.

CHAPTER XIV.

LITERARY CLUBS.

Latent or supposed Bohemian instincts in Literary Men — The Arts — General character of the Establishment — External indications of the tribe of Artists — Mr. Sharpe — Mr. Singleton Delmé, and others — *Literati* of the Arts Club — Mr. Shallowby Hum — Mr. Thomas Highlow — Mr. Henry Monsoon — Mr. Theodore Tremaine, the Poet, and his Satellites — The Arundel Club — General features and *Personnel* of Members — The Club by Day — The *Table d'hôte* — The Club by Night — Mr. Aristarchus Clemens — The London Journalist, Mr. Singleton Penn — Mr. Pungent — Mr. Fitzroy.

WE sincerely trust that we do not weary the reader by detaining him so long on the ground of literary club life; but the theme is so varied, so many-sided, and to a certain extent so rich and picturesque, that we should have done but scant justice to it unless we were to introduce him to certain social nooks and club haunts of literary men, whose names he may perhaps search for in vain amid the list that is appended to that invaluable annual, 'Who's Who?'

Much as the rapid and recent influx of wealth into the profession has done to accommodate the life and habits of men of letters to the standard that attains amongst ordinary mortals, and to assimilate the appearance of literary

clubs pretty closely to that of societies which make no pretension to an intellectual *raison d'être*, there still lingers in the veins of the bulk of the men who live by the pencil or the pen, or by any other of the means of existence which art offers, a dash of the old wild blood which impelled the strange careers of the Savages and the Boyces of the past. Literature in its multitudinous forms does indeed open up a career of unimpeachable respectability ; and it is gratifying to think that there are members of the profession whose lives have been continuous and consistent embodiments of all the cardinal virtues. But in spite of this, it is something more than the pure fancy of ignorant boys and silly girls that there is still over the sacred calling of letters the trail of the ancient serpent. Far be it from us to preach the doctrine of a flashy, spurious Bohemianism : yet in some way or other, the old cloven hoof will occasionally peep out ; there yet linger in the system some traces of that disreputable hankering after irregularity, that shocking spirit of mutiny against established usages of society, which in the proper course of things ought to have been relegated to the confines of annihilation full a quarter of a century ago. Your modern novelist, journalist, essayist, or dramatic author may be a man of the highest taste, may haunt Belgravian saloons, and figure habitually in the dining-rooms of May Fair ; but the existence of some measure of allegiance to the forms of fashionable decorum by no means necessarily implies that this is the only society which he is able to tolerate. This

periodical and intermittent craving for full social freedom and entire liberty of social action, constituting as it does, whatever may be urged against the proposition, an unquestionably real characteristic of the majority of the members of the profession of letters, has found its natural expression in the establishment of certain clubs, which, though by no means wanting in various appliances for comfort and convenience, are fettered by little of the formality that pervades those more pretentious establishments which we have up to this time visited.

“We have not all of us five thousand a-year and a deer-park,” remarks one of Mr. Lever’s heroes; and there are a great many men in London who live by their pen, true scholars and gentlemen, and who do very good work, too, that for various reasons find it inconvenient to belong to a club whose entrance fee is thirty guineas, and whose annual subscription is eight. If we have joint-stock palaces for the more opulent of artists and *littérateurs*, it is only fair that their humbler establishments should be allowed to the less fortunate majority; then, when the age arrives in which every writer is enabled to keep his brougham and his valet, and not till then, may we expect to find that the only literary clubs in London are such as are conducted on the principles which regulate the management of the *Athenæum*, or even the *Garrick*. In the present day the tendency amongst men of letters is far more in the direction of snobbish and profuse display than in that of an obstinate *Bohemianism*. The functions

fulfilled by literary clubs of the calibre of those to which we now propose introducing the reader are thus twofold. In the first place, they gratify the social instincts of men who have not the opportunity of indulging them on a more splendid scale ; in the second place, they afford an innocent outlet for the ebullition of that ancient spirit of erratic informality, and realize that restless desire to escape from the severer rules of set life, which we have already ventured, rightly or wrongly, to characterize as ineradicable from the composition of the representatives of literature as a class. And the freest and least ceremonious of these societies merely exemplifies the reaction which was to have been expected against the spirit of formality and show that is embodied in modern clubs.

Somewhere in the region of Hanover Square, withdrawn only a few yards from the roar and bustle of Oxford Street, is situated a little club-house of the kind to which we have alluded. The name of this society, and there is no reason why its real name should not at once be given, is the Arts. Next to its members, one of the most marked features of this club is the curious old mansion of which it is the corporate occupant. As a private house it would charm the spirit of the most inveterate antiquarian ; as a club-house it is one of the most comfortable in London. The rooms, too, are furnished with an eye not less to effect than to ease ; there is a judicious disposition of couches and arm-chairs, which betokens the skilled eye of the caterer for physical

quiescence and mental tranquillity. There is an excellent reading-room amply furnished with all the journals of the day—we believe it is called by courtesy the drawing-room—and there is the full complement of other apartments devoted to different purposes, and fitted up in various ways. Other clubs you may find whose premises are more spacious, and whose rooms are more numerous, but it would be difficult to mention another which is calculated to inspire you with so absorbing a notion of modest comfort as the Arts.

Within certain limits the Arts is indeed the liberty-hall of club life; you may lounge in, cigar in mouth, and be under no necessity of extinguishing it, at the risk of receiving a courteous but decisive reprimand from the hall-porter in his box, or some over-zealous committeeman who happens to be patrolling the premises. A gentle odour of tobacco is indeed the natural accompaniment to the atmosphere of the different rooms at the Arts. You may stroll from one apartment into the other, and may exhale the delicate blue circlets of fumigation, with the comfortable knowledge that you are after all merely conforming to the customary usages of the establishment. Again, at the Arts there are none of those restrictions which, at most clubs, are placed upon the presence of visitors. For the time being, the friend whom you may choose to introduce is as absolutely the master of all that he surveys as you are yourself. Under your guidance, or with your sanction, he may go where

he likes without the least fear of being looked upon as an intruder. In a word, as Mr. Bob Kennedy, a regular *habitué* of that establishment, is in the habit of saying, "I tell you what it is; in spite of a good deal of mismanagement, to say nothing of these infernal 'calls,' the Arts is what I call a deucedly comfortable crib, and I like it." It is, in fact, a very felicitous compromise between aristocratic stiffness and vulgar Bohemianism, and, as such, has most emphatically a mission.

Who are its members? Well, if the peripatetic peruser of these pages will stroll in with us, we will endeavour to initiate him as effectively as may be into the esoteric life of the establishment. Art, as may be supposed from the name of the club, is very fairly represented; and, indeed, from the fantastic devices with which members are occasionally fond of decorating the periodicals and journals which lie on the reading-room table, it might at once be presumed that there is no lack among them of pictorial ability, misplaced though in these cases it may be. Literature musters a very respectable contingent, and there is of course, the usual nondescript element consisting, as in such cases it usually does consist, of gentlemen engaged in commercial pursuits, who have suddenly discovered an artistic side to their nature; barristers who, being briefless, aspire to the curriculum of letters, and army officers who, on the strength of having taken part in one or two amateur theatrical performances in various garrison towns, become suddenly possessed with the idea that they are

inspired with the mighty afflatus of histrionic art. One thing let us say *in limine*, the tone of the Arts Club is thoroughly good; and if occasionally something priggish in its constitution crops out, it is at any rate uniformly gentlemanly: if it has not the air of a palace, it is at least without the atmosphere of the shebeen.

And you may have the pleasure of noticing on the premises a very fair sprinkling of literary and artistic celebrities, if your friend who pilots you is cunning in times and seasons. The Arts, let it be understood, is, as we have already remarked, a club of an exceedingly open-hearted disposition towards visitors. However, it is as well to postpone your visit there till the hours draw on at which the daylight begins to fade; for as the artistic element forms the nucleus of the club, till then its attendance is but scant—the appearance of the star of Hesperus being the signal for the painter, in deference to the law which orders the diurnal revolution of the earth, to quit his studio and take his pleasure. Walk up then into the cosy drawing-room—as we have said, it is a smoking-room too—and you will meet with several easily-known representatives of the easel. As a rule, a glance is enough for the knowing—a single look reveals to you the artist. It is a race of men which rejoices in velvet coats, in unkempt hair, and in pipes indoors in preference to cigars; yet spite of these eccentricities of carriage it may be safely said, and it will be readily admitted by anyone who has the slightest knowledge of the facts, that artists

are, as a body, pre-eminently the most pleasant and the best-mannered of any class to be met with in the London intellectual world ; nor would we have it even supposed by the uninitiated reader that the superficial sketch which we have given of the main features that characterize the appearance of the tribe is universally true, or true at all times alike. The Arts is emphatically a place of lounge, and very often the gentleman who is noticeable above his fellows for the elegant *abandon* of his attire in this pleasant establishment, once removed beyond its precincts and placed in the midst of any of the haunts of fashion, will become the most consummate dandy in the world. If you wish to see your ideal of an artist, so far as the exterior of the man goes, glance yonder at Mr. Falcon Sharpe, with his keen profile, his generally rugged look, his rough shaggy hair, his essentially artistic pipe suspended from his lips, and never to be removed. Who is he ? Perhaps you have had on the whole more genuine laughs over the admirable comic sketches that he draws than over the productions of any living artist. Unquestionably his sense of fun and his keen eye for the ridiculous are unrivalled. Who is there that can convulse you so with the portraiture of an indignant *pater-familias* as Mr. Sharpe ? Who draws sporting sketches that are more intrinsically humorous ? Who has a better eye for an effective background, or a more telling notion of colour ?

We will introduce you to another gentleman whose

reputation is European, and whose popularity has reached the throne—Mr. Singleton Delmé, R.A., beyond a doubt the finest colourist of his day. It is not very often that he frequents the Arts; however, he is here to-night, waiting the announcement of his dinner in the snug coffee-room below. His face is a fine one, and not easily, once seen, to be forgotten. A penetrating eye, features delicately yet forcibly moulded, and a remarkably powerful brow tell you that the man has genius. His is a genius which does not exhibit itself in his painting alone; he has indeed elected to be an artist, and to embody his fancies and imaginings on the canvas rather than in any other manner. Had he turned his attention to literature, excellence and eminence might have been predicted for him; as it is, he can compose charming *chansons*; he is an expert musician; as a speaker he is graceful and epigrammatic; and as a painter he possesses gifts which are owned by no one save himself. As you see his pictures, your mind absolutely revels in their intense richness: a bloom, like that of a peach, seems to overspread the whole—warm rather than sensuous—and the impression left upon your mind is precisely that which velvet leaves upon the touch. This is the highest effect of beauty—this is the very acme of perfection, whether in the art of the poet or in that of the painter. Mr. Singleton Delmé will not pass away without having left an ennobling stamp of no common order upon English art.

That gentleman yonder, very nattily dressed, the theme of whose conversation, whatever it may be, is sufficient to create in him no small degree of enthusiasm, is Mr. Frank Weston, one of the most successful young artists of the day; and by him is seated a rising brother in art, Mr. Septimus Splinter. Again, away to the left there, talking in accents full of gentlemanly and genial humour, with a face that you would select, no matter amidst how many others you first saw it, as remarkable, bearing no small resemblance to the old portraits of Vandyke, or the traditional countenance of the Elizabethan courtiers, whom painters love to depict, sits Mr. Hertford Braisley. These and many more there are, all favourable specimens of the English artist, grouped together in knots of two and three, pleasantly chatting over the prospects of some coming pictorial exhibition; interchanging friendly comments and gracious criticism; remarking how vastly So-and-So has improved in his work since the last Dudley; discussing the abominable "hanging," which disgraces the Academy, and pleasantly speculating on the best method for the reform of the whole system. Perhaps to the chance visitor their conversations may savour of what is known as "shop:" but then the chance visitor, whoever he may be, knows perfectly well the nature of the club to which he is introduced, and if he does not care about its accompaniments, the reply is simple—let him keep away. He is welcome if he comes, and if he is absent because he does not care to be present, he will at once consult his own

pleasure and that of a majority of the members of this genial little establishment.

It is by no means to be supposed that the members of the club are exclusively selected from those artists whose medium of expression is colour, and whose field of display the canvas. Literature is fairly represented as well. Indeed, the Arts may boast of numbering amongst its *habitués* a very fair proportion of moderately well-known novelists, journalists, essayists, and even poets. That gentleman—we will imagine the time to be as near as possible 9 P.M.—who has just entered, and is at present asking for “Six of brandy,” and interrogatively remarking to the stranger who has accompanied him, “What’ll you ’ave?” is Mr. Shallowby Hum, in his own opinion an accomplished English scholar, an author who has an immense influence upon contemporary thought, and a classicist of no small pretensions. Only encourage Shallowby and he will give you his criticism on “grand old ’Omer” and “our friend ’Orace.” As for the latter author, he will actually have the barefaced impudence to assure you that he never travels without a miniature edition of his works in his waistcoat. We have heard before now of a rather cynical gentleman who played a somewhat severe trick upon Shallowby Hum. This gentleman enticed Shallowby into his library, and handing down to him from his shelves a volume of Dillenburger’s ‘Horace,’ asked his (Shallowby’s) opinion on a disputed passage.

“Oh,” immediately replied Hum, with astounding im-

puddence, "I never look at any text but that of our friend Orellius."

"Very well," said his tormentor, "take Orellius; here it is;" and, infinitely to Hum's disgust, the production of that eminent Swiss scholar was at once placed in his hands.

Shallowby trembled visibly, looked at the page, and then looked at his window, toyed nervously with his watch-chain, and, finally, pulling his watch out of his pocket, discovered that he had an engagement at twelve, and that he would, as it was, inevitably be ten minutes late.

Yet Mr. Shallowby Hum is not unsuccessful as an author. The fellow has learned the trade-trick of inventing titles. Did not his book, 'Prigs and Impostors, by One of Themselves,' run through half-a-dozen editions? and as for his collection of essays, called 'The Mud-Rake,' and collected from the pages of 'The Home Messenger,' to which he is a regular contributor, make a hit in its own small way? Of course it is very easy to see that our friend Shallowby is a most arrant humbug. That, however, makes no difference either to him or to his publishers. Shallowby gets on, gets on in spite of the qualities which his name implies, in spite of his pretentious inanity, in spite of his offensive affectation of geniality, in spite of his gushing vulgarity. Well, after all, Shallowby deserves it; for though he has no shadow of a claim to the title of a man of letters, he is an honest, industrious drudge for all that.

If you want to see a specimen of an eminently successful man, turn yonder. That is Mr. Thomas Highlow, whose boast it is that he has never lost a minute, and never missed an opportunity. He is a novelist, a reviewer, an essayist, a writer on scientific subjects; in fact, Mr. Tom Highlow is everything. His enemies say that his main characteristic is a pushing impudence. Well, what if it is, so long as it answers his purpose? Not less successful in his way either is Mr. Henry Monsoon, who, if you enter the Arts a little later in the day—say about eleven o'clock at night—you will find gorgeous in evening dress. Mr. Monsoon is believed to go into society more than any other representative of London literature; languidly puffing a very excellent cigar, and lazily letting drop from his lips a continuous stream of fashionable gossip. Mr. Monsoon is a novelist, and an exceedingly clever one. For hard descriptions of men, women, and manners he is unsurpassed. There is not a writer living who succeeds better in drawing pretty, wicked women, and men hardened by contact with the world till nature is eliminated; all that is left in the way of residuum is an artificial capacity for cynical criticism.

An essentially genial and harmonious club the Arts is. The United Arts it used to be called; and though it was once suggested, as an amendment, that the syllable *dis* should be prefixed to the epithet, united in its more important features it still remains. Not that, at the present day, the club lacks representatives of more than one

school of art, each thoroughly convinced that the principles which he upholds, and the ideas which in his workmanship he endeavours to embody, are those that are alone sound or true. The apostles of pre-Raphaelitism muster strong here—a race easily knowable from a glance at the exterior of their persons. Look at Mr. Brown Smith, he is a stanch champion of the school. There is something quite as *bizarre* in his look as there is in his pictures. His hair, of an auburn—or is it a reddish?—hue, rarely entrusted, judging from its length, to the tonsorial hands, descends considerably below the collar of his coat: his air is distrait, his dress peculiar, and his gestures eccentric. In a word, he is an enthusiast; and in this age, when sincerity and earnestness are at a discount, enthusiasm, on whatever side it may be enlisted, is refreshing. Who is his companion on the left, you ask, just commencing to speak, whose inaugural utterances are the signal for reverential silence on the part of his fellows? An artist: yes, certainly; but an artist whose medium of expression is language. That is Mr. Theodore Tremaine, the poet, who, considering his years, has excited more commotion in the world of letters than any genius of his time: for a genius Theodore Tremaine undeniably possesses. Read his poems, and you yield to the irresistible charm of his music, the sumptuous melody of his rhythm, as to the subtle witchery of the magician. Just at present he is rather, as all the world knows, the fashion. If he cannot check some emotions of vanity at the extraor-

dinary sensation which his writings have created, it is scarcely to be wondered at. He has been alternately idolized and execrated. Critics have characterized his works as at once invested with all the questionable purity of Greek mythology and the sublime beauties of Greek art. The only language in which he has been talked of is the language of superlatives and extremes. Young men have raved about him in public: ladies have devoured his poetical beauties in private. Mr. Theodore Tremain has certainly hit upon a distinctly original vein. Whether the *furor* which has waited on him is a merely transient phase in the history of a British public's taste, or is destined to leave behind it a residuum of influence in literature, remains indeed to be seen. He has originated a school—a host of pigmy copyists in numbers numberless. And naturally possessing admirers, he possesses enemies; but not even the latter deny the reality of his great powers. At the Arts, however, the element of admiration for Mr. Tremain preponderates over the element of hostility, and whenever he is in the club you may be sure to find hovering near him a select band of toadies and satellites,—witness that group assembled over yonder now. That remarkable-looking specimen of humanity, who never loses an opportunity of expressing his wonderment and delight whenever Mr. Tremain says anything which is more than usually strong-flavoured, whose whole cast of countenance is eminently Hebraic, and the contour of whose nasal organ reminds you of the

outline of the figure six, is Mr. Abraham Braham, a gentleman who makes it the business of his life to applaud Mr. Tremaine, and to dog his footsteps with a more than Boswellian fidelity. Whether Mr. Theodore Tremaine has any reason to be grateful for the libations of adulatory homage which this gentleman and others of the same order pour upon his devoted head is another question. The satellite system is seldom good for any one; and perhaps the worst that his bitterest enemy should wish Mr. Tremaine is, that he should be unable to shake off the company of those fulsome panegyrists who gather round him at the Arts and other similar haunts. As it is, in his calm moments Mr. Tremaine is beyond doubt one of the most attractive talkers which the Arts Club counts amongst its members. Listen to him now. No subject comes amiss to him: for his general information is extensive. Greek scholarship, mediæval tradition, modern art, Baudelaire, Blake, Alfred de Musset, Heinrich Heine—on each or on all of these, only let him have the conversational bit fairly between his teeth, he will hold forth for hours. It will be a pity if this second Shelley does not carve for himself an enduring niche in the temple of fame. Before he can do so, he must receive what he is as yet without—the criticism of moderation. A critic has no business to be transported with vague ecstasies of delight, or to vent his disapproval in tones of intemperate abuse; and Mr. Tremaine's critics, up to the present time, have, one and all,

shown that they are entirely incapable of preserving an attitude, we say, not of impartiality, but even of moderation. Inarticulate eulogy, and equally inarticulate censure, purblind enemies, and far worse than these, wholly blind friends—these are the banes against which Mr. Tremaine has had to contend.

But the reader has seen enough of the Arts Club and its *habitués* to form a very fair notion of both. We will bid adieu to it,—to its pleasant suite of apartments upstairs, its conveniently ordered coffee-room, its chambers dedicated to the purposes of billiards and whist respectively, and all its other attractions,—and meanwhile go elsewhere.

It will be manifest that the literary clubs which we have already visited, notwithstanding the identity of the purpose for which they profess to be established, are possessed of widely varying and mutually antagonistic characteristics. The Athenæum differs from the Garrick, and the Garrick, again, occupies a position quite different from that which belongs to the Arts. We have, in fact, been treading the pleasant and dangerously easy slope of Bohemianism,—gradually nearing the precincts of that empire over which, on Continental soil, Henri Mürger reigned supreme, but reigned unfortunately without leaving behind him any worthy successor. Hismonarchy was extensive, but, as events have shown, it was not hereditary. Bohemianism, however, is an expression which we here use to denote nothing else than freedom from conventional restrictions, a sublime contempt of the

laws which regulate ordinary society, the tendency, in fine, of the individual to assert by practice his claim to live the life he chooses, in spite of the forces of a levelling uniformity that may be at work around him. If something of this spirit was discernible in the *rationale* of such a club as that which we have recently quitted, much more will it be to be observed in the establishment that we are about to visit.

The scene, then, is entirely changed. We have passed out of that species of club life and those regions of club land in which splendour and show are the order of the day. We have bid, for the present, adieu to all visions of well-trained club waiters—to their plush breeches and their brass-buttoned coats. We shall for a while see no more of endless suites of *salons*, of fine flights of stairs, of halls aglow with the glory of gas, or of any of those special features which go towards the composition of the popular idea of the club. Instead, we have entered a modest, unpretending little mansion, situated in one of the streets that project from the Strand at right angles to the river, which, judging from the appearance of the exterior, and the purposes to which a majority of the tenements in the same thoroughfare are devoted, might be either a private hotel or a solicitor's office. If the house at which we have stopped can be said to partake of the nature of either of these establishments, it is rather that of the former than the latter: for it is indeed none other than the head-quarters of the Arundel Club.

As we have already hinted, the Arundel is very far from possessing any eminently political qualities. It is simply a humble description of Liberty Hall: or perhaps Licence House would be a better *alias*. What particular function is it supposed to discharge in the great economy of London club life? what is its *raison d'être*? If you consult the thin little pamphlet containing the rules of the establishment—for rules, after all, it possesses—you will see, we believe, that it is established for the sake of affording a pleasant and convenient rendezvous to gentlemen who are connected with literature, science, or art. In respect of this profession it resembles then the Atheneum: but with the profession all similarity is at an end. Contrast is the essence of knowledge, and an idea of life at the Arundel will best be gained by viewing its internal aspects at two or three different periods of the twenty-four hours.

A very half-awake look, indeed, does the Arundel present if you enter it, say, about an hour after noon. The rooms impress you with the conviction that they have been up all night, and that you have intruded upon them with unjustifiable prematurity. A sleepy-eyed waiter is busy collecting empty bottles, the remnants of cigars, half-smoked pipes, and tumblers, which, with a teaspoon inside them, and a few capacious metal jugs, standing in their immediate vicinage, you connect insensibly, by a very simple process of association, with the idea of hot grog overnight, or rather at an early hour of the present

morning. There are the newspapers of the day, spread out upon the table, waiting to be read: but the readers have not yet come. Indeed, to a majority of the *habitués* of the Arundel, the diurnal revolution of the earth round its axis is a meaningless phrase. What is it to them that the sun rises and sets at a certain hour, so long as agreeable company is to be found and grateful beverages to be quaffed within the precincts of their club, at the hours when they feel in the humour for both? What is it to them, to borrow the felicitous expression of Captain Morris, the bard of that erewhile illustrious association, the "Sublime Society of Beef-steaks," that their days are shortened, if only their nights are lengthened? And long, almost beyond precedent, the nights at the Arundel are.

The members of this institution, these jovial mortals, who, judging from their practices, seem resolutely bent upon reproducing in this London of ours the order of existence that prevails at the Antipodes,—who are they? Well, the society is somewhat miscellaneous, and, as we shall presently see, not a little amusing in its composition. First, you have a large contingent of journalists—it is currently reported that the greater portion of the 'People's Banner' is written in one of the upstairs rooms at the Arundel—then a very heavy brigade representative of the theatrical interest; and these two classes may be considered as forming the nucleus of the club. Recently there has been a severe irruption of barristers into the

establishment; to these ingredients add a fair sprinkling of minor artists, of gentlemen whose business is "in the City," and of gentlemen the locality of whose occupations is a profound mystery, and the materials of which the society in question is built will have been indicated nearly enough. Till two or three hours after noon the rooms at the Arundel present an almost uninterrupted scene of desolation. Perhaps at intervals a stray member or two may drop in, and the popping of corks, followed by the melodious plash of some effervescing fluid into "tumblers bottomed well with brandy," will break the utter silence that reigns around. But you cannot reckon with certainty on discovering any signs of animate existence within the club till Big Ben has boomed forth the hour of four from his Westminster Tower. Then, just as the evening papers make their appearance, it is tolerably sure that some one or other will lounge into the sitting room, and suggest that the time for breakfast has arrived. Thirty or forty minutes afterwards this scanty company will be reinforced by the entrance of sundry dramatic critics and theatrical celebrities, to suit whose convenience a table d'hôte dinner has been prepared for five o'clock, the celebration of which in the chamber below once over, the club quickly reassumes till close upon midnight its afternoon appearance of desertion.

As for the method or *personnel* of the Arundel table d'hôte, there is no necessity for troubling the reader with a very minute description of either. The meal, such as

it is, partakes of the nature of what is known as "a free-and-easy;" that is, there is a freedom in the general bearing and demeanour of the members, which is almost licence, and the only feature about the whole proceeding that is not pre-eminently easy is perhaps to be seen in the viands placed on the table, whose consumption may, save in the case of the most coarsely robust appetite, be decidedly difficult. No ceremony here; nothing of the sort—nothing to remind you of the ordinary club-house dinner. "Working men, come as you are;" and the professional members of the Arundel sit down to the afternoon meal that they dignify with the title of dinner, very much as they are indeed; a certain waggish member of this society once remarked, that the establishment of a lavatory was the death-blow of the club. However, there are few traces enough in any of the gentlemen present to-night of having taken particular advantage of this detestable innovation of refined Sybaritism. Possibly the afternoon may be warm, and the atmosphere of the room oppressive. By way of supplementing the deficiencies of ventilation perceptible in the apartment, you may very likely see an eminent writer of burlesque deliberately denude himself of his coat, and sit down to dinner in his shirt-sleeves. Delightfully primitive, is it not? delightful especially, if you happen to be his next-door neighbour. As for the conversation audible on such occasions, it must be confessed that there is a certain monotony about it. When it is not theatrical it is musical, and when it is not

musical it is theatrical. The stage, dramatic or operatic, that is the Alpha and the Omega of all the babble that you hear—the *terminus a quo* and *ad quem* of every sentiment to which utterance is given. No doubt it is possible to pick up a great deal of gossip in this way that you would not otherwise have heard : so it is if you read those columns of recondite mendacity which figure in provincial newspapers under the head of “ London Correspondence.” Of course, this assemblage and this sort of chatter have their charms. For instance, here to-night is Mr. Jenkins Ephraim, one of the cleverest and most hard-worked Old Bailey barristers that we have. To him the table d’hôte at the Arundel is the great amusement of his life. His proclivities are strongly theatrical, and there is nothing which pleases him better than to listen to the latest scandal of the green-room, and to hear one actor in comedy abusing a fellow-actor in tragedy. These gentlemen of “ the profession ” — how they love one another. The mutual affection which prevails among the tribe of authors is not excessive ; and as for the international jealousies of the *genus irritabile vatum*, they are proverbial. Neither do punsters impress you with the conviction of a fraternity dwelling in entire peace and unity with itself. But all these in comparison with your modern stage-strutters are embodiments of mutual love and brotherly amity. Listen to that gentleman yonder, Mr. Figgins, who has just secured an engagement as *jeune premier* at the Theseum theatre. Only notice his

remarks to Mr. Bland, the dramatic writer, in his shirt-sleeves, on the subject of Mr. Olozagez, who belongs to the same company. Are they not full of the very quintessence of the milk of human kindness? Yes. Figgins has no doubt that Olozagez might do great things if only he had received a proper training; but as it is—and Figgins shrugs his shoulders in a manner significant of contemptuous pity—well, to be frank, it does seem to him a curious thing how Olozagez ever managed to get an engagement at the Theseum? And then this same Figgins goes on to hint to Bland, that if he wants the part of the sentimental hero in his forthcoming comedy-drama, really well done—well, never mind, and “What’ll ye ’ave to drink?” that is the final comment with which Figgins clenches his observations to Bland; but Bland, who is not to be bribed by the third-rate gooseberry which Figgins will offer him, declares, with a sardonic smile, that he is going to have “a cup of tea up-stairs.”

What the kiss of the fairy prince was to the enchanted princess, that the stroke of the hour of twelve is to the Arundel. The theatres are over, and straight the gathering commences. In they come, and in for the next two or three hours they will continue to come, from the four winds of heaven—from the Houses of Parliament; from solitary chambers; from newspaper offices; from boxes and from stalls; and from where else heaven only knows. As if by the influence of magic, the whole place suddenly becomes inspired with a new life. The sleepy-eyed waiter

who, some twelve hours ago, scarce knew whether he was standing on his heels or his head, is animated in a moment with the briskness of a bee. Large orders for supper are given on every side: the sharp crack of the champagne cork makes music in the land; each particular corner and angle of the apartment is pervaded with an appetizing odour of devilled bones or kidneys—they understand a supper at the Arundel—and the air is rendered fragrant with delicious perfumes to which it is hard to say whether whisky or lemon most contributes.

“Henry, I want some supper,” observes an elderly gentleman, who makes his appearance some half-hour after midnight. “What have you got?” And Henry runs through the regulation list—“Chops, sir; steaks, sir; kidney; or can let you have a nice dish of ‘ash, sir; or would you prefer some devilled bones? or there’s a prime tureen of tripe just ready, sir.”

The gentleman just addressed meditates for a moment, and thinks on the whole that he will have tripe,—a savoury dish enough, we believe, though we cannot speak from experience. And this vivand—this minor edition of Lucullus—who is he? Enter the Arundel any night you like, and the odds are precisely ten to one that you find him there. “Age does not wither him, nor custom stale” his perennial youth. As for the number of Mr. Clemens Aristarchus’ years, that is an unknown quantity. Like Nestor, he has seen many generations of playwrights and play-actors. Mr. Aristarchus’ occupation is that of thea-

trical critic for about half-a-dozen papers, and men who are long past the meridian of existence inform you that when they were barely out of their teens they can remember Clemens as comparatively advanced in life. This much is certain,—that if you mention the name of any theatrical celebrity, major or minor, who has flourished within the last half-century or so, Aristarchus “assisted” at the first appearance. Just as the old Greeks used to reckon time by the recurrence of their Olympian games; just as the modern turfite distinguishes year from year by associating it with the name of successive winners for the Derby, the St. Leger, or the Cesarewitch; so Aristarchus, if he wished, could characterize off-hand all the dramatic seasons that have been since the century began by connecting them with the *débuts* of certain bright particular histrionic stars. The man’s mind impresses you as containing an accumulation of cuttings from the dramatic advertisements of ‘The Times’ ever since the year 1800.

What the Arundel would do without Aristarchus or Aristarchus without the Arundel is a contingency too fearful to contemplate. And our friend Clemens stands the life well. Late hours have absolutely no effect upon his seasoned nature: *cruda deo viridisque senectus*. To-night he has been to—say three—theatres; he has written perhaps four separate critiques; has drawn out a rough sketch of his Christmas pantomime,—Aristarchus has been the purveyor of pantomimes to the great theatre at the corner of Bow Street from time immemorial. It is the fifth

day of the week, and every evening since the week began Aristarchus has been similarly occupied ; yet here he is as fresh as ever, and quite prepared, if need be, to be at it again. In half-an-hour his supper will have been discussed, and you may notice our friend in his favourite corner in the adjoining room, smoking his favourite long clay, listening the while with an air of placid approval to all that goes on around him, or occasionally interpolating the current conversation with an anecdote, which, to the younger members of the company present, seems almost like an echo from the days before the flood.

Yonder sits another gentleman, a fair representative specimen of the race of dramatic critics, though very different in all respects from Mr. Aristarchus Clemens. He is sure to have a pretty good gathering of friends and acquaintances round his chair ; for, as we have said, a considerable proportion of the members of the Arundel belong to the theatrical profession, and our friend there is decidedly a man of weight in the theatrical world. He can write an actor up, or he can write an actor down ; consequently it is highly advisable for the modern Roscii who wish to get good notices to pay this gentleman court. He is, however, an old hand at the business, and the compliments and flattery which might prove dangerous snares to critics of more tender years, fall harmlessly enough on him. The court of appeal on the merits of any drama, of any actor or actress, which is final to him, is not his own critical conscience, but the admonition which he has

previously received from the proprietors of the journal that he may happen to represent, who have interests of their own to serve, and who serve them in this way. And yet there are grumblers, who complain that dramatic criticism generally is in a very corrupt state.

That big burly man, who has just glided in with less noise than you would have fancied it was possible for him to make, and, having occupied the few minutes which the preparation for his supper required with reading extracts from an article in the 'Revue des Deux Mondes' on "Les Armées du Monde," sits down with placid satisfaction to his chops and pint-bottle of Medoc, is Mr. Porpoise Penn—one of the most indefatigable journalists in London. For the last twenty years not a day has probably elapsed without his having written one leading article at least, and very often the one has been doubled. His politics?—well, at this present moment, they are of the philosophical Radical order, but was any sudden turn in the game to render it expedient for him to change his front, his scruples would not prevent him from becoming Liberal-Conservative, Conservative-Liberal, or what you will. *Omnia Romæ cum pretio sunt*, and the convictions of the ordinary journalist are usually amenable to considerations of a financial nature. But Mr. Penn, in spite of this, does his work thoroughly and well. His information is sound and extensive; and if you are at fault for a date or a name, if you want to know the various political complications which have taken place in Prussian

cabinets any time during the past twenty years—in a word, if you want to know any matter of detail touching home or foreign administration, Penn is the man to give it you. Editors extol him as thoroughly trustworthy, and the public?—well, Penn's style is not bad: indeed his articles have only one fault, and that is a fault which he, in common with almost every writer for the newspaper press—the exceptions being so few that they might be counted upon one's fingers—possesses—he shows no grasp of principles. Penn's memory is excellent, and his industry unimpeachable; but neither memory nor industry can supply the place of the faculty of felicitous generalization. Herein lies the difference between the French journalist and his antitype on the other side of *La Manche*. Infallibility is equally beyond the reach of both; but whereas the former always gives you a point of view, no matter whether it be right or wrong, the latter seems constitutionally incapable of doing anything of the kind. Just as the policy of a statesman, unless it is founded upon some definite principle, is a mere misnomer, so a newspaper article which is not governed by the same predominating influence is absolutely worthless. Penn and his brethren believe that to instruct the million they need merely mention names; that is their great mistake: they should expound principles.

A new arrival—one which is greeted with satisfaction on all sides: enter Jack Pungent, most accomplished and epigrammatic of nineteenth-century playwrights, most

entertaining of conversationalists, very cynical, very severe in his remarks, yet pronounced by everyone to be an excellent fellow at heart. As Mr. Pungent sits down to the supper-table the merriment of the situation increases. Jack is sure to have an excellent story to tell, and he tells it admirably; another follows that, and then another; the laughter increases; new arrivals every minute; more popping of corks; the room grows absolutely nebulous with the volumes of tobacco-smoke puffed from pipe or cigar; sweeter still, and still more seductive, is the fragrance of punch wafted up to the ceiling, and the mirth of the evening is at last fairly in full swing. What a contrast do those rooms now present to the utter desolation and stillness which they embodied twelve hours ago!

Presently—it is now close upon three A.M.—enters a gentleman, who it is well known beforehand will inevitably arrive about this period—Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy. As you might infer from his name, he is an actor, or, to speak more technically, he is a member of the “profession.” Long custom has naturalized for Mr. Fitzroy a mode of life which is, to say the least of it, peculiar. It is generally believed that he does leave the Arundel at some hour during the early morning—believed, we say, because, as he invariably lingers on till all his comrades have departed, the exact period at which he too vanishes cannot be fixed with any degree of certainty. Mr. Fitzroy’s day, save when a new piece at the theatre

at which he is engaged is in course of rehearsal, commences about two or three P.M., and continues for about twelve hours in succession. His mornings are coincident with most persons' afternoons, his afternoons with the evenings of ordinary humanity, and so on; yet his work is done, and done capitally; his health is good and his spirits excellent.

As we have already said, Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy is not the only member of the Arundel who delights in this systematic inversion of existence. The Arundel is undeniably a late club. Of course you may belong to it and keep hours as early as you choose, but in that case you will find little in the apartments on the occasion of your visits, save the walls, the furniture, and the newspapers. If you go up-stairs you may meet with Wiggins and Waggins writing their leading articles for their respective journals; but at the best these two gentlemen are not very enjoyable society, and you might as well endeavour to extract fun out of a cod-fish or blood from a stone as anything that is worth hearing in the way of a remark from either Wiggins or Waggins while they are going through that stage of intellectual parturition which always precedes the enlightenment of the public. With all its little peculiarities, the function which the Arundel discharges is a thoroughly intelligible and eminently useful one. A club of the approved West End type it certainly is not, but then neither does it pretend to be. . But if it occurs to you in the course of a somewhat protracted

evening, spent miscellaneously about London, that you want supper, and that you would like to have it accompanied with unrestricted surroundings, then the Arundel is a capital place. Take it for what it is, a convenient supper-room and a capital smoking-room, and if you do not mind risking a dash of headache on the ensuing morrow, you could go to no more eligible haunt. There is sure to be some one there who is worth seeing and worth talking to.

CHAPTER XV.

NONDESCRIPT CLUBS.

Clubs, falsely so-called—Decline of Bohemianism—The Political Economy Club—The Decemvirs—The Century—Mr. Smiffle—First Principles again—Comtism *v.* Byronism—The Buffers—Its associations—Eglinton Conyers, Esq.—Mr. Stathos—Mr. Caustic Tonans—The Zingari Club—Its *habitat* and *personnel*—Mr. Chigg.

A CERTAIN illustrious and contemporary historian of ancient Greece, none other than Mr. Grote, has happily characterized the old Hellenic myths as ingenious efforts to picture a past which was never a present. In language nearly similar we might differentiate most of the clubs that we purpose honouring with a few cursory glances in this chapter, as decidedly abortive essays to restore amongst us sundry phenomena in our social history which are gone by for ever. As the atmosphere in which we live changes, the institutions in which we delight must submit to a corresponding metamorphosis; and so far as regards clubs—a fact to which we have already had occasion to direct attention—a mighty alteration indeed has come over the spirit of our dreams. We have seen, at the expense of as little historical research as has barely an-

swered our object, that the modern club had its germ in the tavern meetings of a vanished generation ; whereas by the club of our own day we signify a self-supporting establishment, with a special and distinct habitation of its own. In the existing condition of our social economy, it is only clubs based upon this foundation which have any claim to be called or considered clubs at all. Yet in the face of this undeniable truth, there is at present in the metropolis a vast number of societies arrogating to themselves that dignity of nomenclature in which the institutions described in the foregoing chapters properly rejoice, standing in much the same relation to the Carlton, the Athenæum, *et hoc genus omne*, that the urchin Arab of the streets does to the schoolboy born of middle-class parents, or the race known as the Houseless Poor to the respectable mechanic, the proud possessor of his own Lares or Penates—clubs, to be guilty ourselves of the misnomer, without club laws, dragging on a precarious existence, now asserting their presence in one *deversorium*, and now in another, held alternately by their members at Smith's hotel in, say, Blackfriars, and the Spotted Hart in, say, Covent Garden. It is only our conscientious desire to hold the mirror as accurately as may be up to nature in these pages, that induces us to take any cognizance of these social anachronisms here.

For social anachronisms most unquestionably they are— attempts to perpetuate institutions which, in the nature of things, have no place amongst us, and which, when repro-

duced amid such untoward influences, must necessarily be failures and shams. How is it that the genuine Bohemianism exists no longer? The reason is not far to seek. It is on all sides a practically admitted truth, that the labourer is worthy of his hire. It is because the intellectual toilers of the generation are so much more generously repaid for their invaluable labour that they have dispensed with that law which half-a-century since ordained a nondescript and a generally uncomfortable existence as the first condition of their being. The artist or the *littérateur* who fifty years ago was precluded by the narrowness of his means from living in the world of respectability—to say nothing of fashion—now receives, or if he chooses, may receive, a steady and decent income, which enables him to subscribe to the conventionalities and proprieties of society. The rapid and recent rise of wages for mental labour has been in effect a deathblow to Bohemianism. The artist or author who desires the society of his fellows, looks for it no longer in the pothouses of the town; you will find him at his club—his club, attaching to the word its desirable and meritorious connotation. And what this connotation is, descriptions sufficiently numerous have been given to show. Now the anomalous and anachronistical associations to which the reader is about to be introduced, simply aim at the keeping up of those traditions of impecuniosity and discomfort which happily enough have, as necessary facts, quite ceased to be invested with any significance or vitality at all. In a word, the nondescript clubs, form-

ing the subject of the present chapter and having for their object nothing more nor less than the restoration and reproduction of a state of things quite gone out of date, are simply to be regarded as fungoid growths and excrescences upon that social system which these volumes are intended to elucidate.

Even in the case of a society so illustrious as that known throughout Europe as the Political Economy Club, the word club is misapplied. Language is in one eternal state of transition, and the meaning of words is in one perpetual condition of flux. The august institution just mentioned may satisfy the requisites of an essay or debating society, assuredly not those of a club, in the sense which rightly or wrongly we attach to that pregnant monosyllable. The Economists meet, we believe, monthly. The programme of their gathering may be intellectual in the highest degree; the only thing is, it is not that of club life as we understand the phrase. Invitations to one of these severe *réunions* are by no means inaccessible to the stranger: and if you once procure one, you may have the satisfaction of knowing that you are in the presence of twelve remarkably able and singularly well-informed English gentlemen. The proceedings of the evening are prefaced by a dinner, variously held at the houses of the different members of the society and in private rooms of eligible hotels. But the dinner is not the event; it is the after-dinner discussion. A gentleman of burly form, bearded like the pard, full of very vigorous expressions and eccentric notions on

the subject of the currency, immediately the claret and olives are on the table, propounds in the voice of a Stentor some abstruse theme of controversy, enunciating his own opinions—sufficiently strong ones by-the-by—as a species of introduction. That is Professor Podger. Or, perhaps, the ball may be opened by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, in a few terse and telling sentences moots some astounding scheme for the conversion of a deficit into a surplus. Not impossibly Mr. J. Stuart Mill—for Mr. Mill is a very regular attendant at the monthly dinners of the Political Economy Club—starts an idea diametrically antagonistic, and the tournament begins; or a well-known banker, who is also a scientific baronet, has some novel thesis to ventilate; or Mr. Grote—a member too—suggests that the financial reforms of Clisthenes furnish the keynote to all true notions of economical amendment. Now this may unmistakably be a feast of reason, but it is not the flow of soul, any more than it is not nineteenth-century club life.

Before we proceed to investigate those societies which we had more particularly in view while passing our introductory criticisms on the current misappropriation of the word club, we will look for a minute or two at certain other societies, which may not incorrectly be placed in the category of institutions falling short of the legitimate club ideal. Has the reader ever heard of a mysterious band rejoicing in the title of the Decemvirs? We trow not. Yet such a society there is. As its name implies, it is

strictly limited to ten members, and, as might be shrewdly conjectured, the tenets which these gentlemen hold are of as strikingly subversive a nature as could well be described. It was *à propos* of the Decemvirs that that confoundedly metaphysical Scot, MacDuffer, tentatively and interrogatively remarked to his equally metaphysical compatriot, MacCadd, who had just revealed to him the fact of the existence of these same Decemvirs, "Ah, weel, I suppose then that they jest discuss everything on the basis of pure reason?" To which satirically responded MacCadd, "Eh, mon, and they discuss matters upon no basis at all." Where the Decemvirs meet, when they meet, and what is the precise method in which their proceedings are conducted, are facts on which, with the very limited information at our disposal, we do not presume authoritatively to pronounce. They are essentially a secret society—quite as secret in most ways as any of those which mark the history of the middle ages. They are men of marvellously penetrating intellect, and terribly remorseless logic. It is quite refreshing to meet a Decemvir in mixed society. The perfection of his breeding is a study in itself. His entire disdain for the feelings and prejudices of others is absolutely sublime. As for the good taste of these gentlemen, it is, of course, infallible. They will never lose an opportunity of talking blasphemy in the presence of a clergyman, or of deriding the institution of matrimony when they are thrown amongst quiet family men. But this is the chartered licence of intellect.

Let us pay a visit to an institution somewhat analogous in nature to that at which we have just glanced, and, in many respects, an enlargement and extension of its more salient features. The Century is, indeed, more of a club proper than most of the societies which this chapter embraces, but is still a club of a totally different kind from any to which the reader has yet been introduced. The primary object of the Century is the ventilation of the extreme and advanced opinions, whether in politics, social ethics, or religion, which happen at the present day to be popular with a certain set of thinkers—young men most of them—who meet together, talk, delude themselves into the idea that they are a school, and that they are on the high road towards achieving the reorganization of the world, and the rehabilitation of humanity. The Century is excessively select, and rigidly intellectual. Its members do not exceed one hundred, and in their own estimate they are all of them men of brains and men of mark. Who are they? Well, if you please, we will stroll into the apartment consecrated to their uses, and survey the *personnel* of the establishment. The Century, we must say at the outset, meets only once a-week, and the period selected is Sunday evening. The room is in a building situated in one of the streets between Hanover Square and Piccadilly, and the conversation that goes on is, as might be expected, monstrously full of mock wisdom, pseudo-erudition, and genuine conceit. Scepticism, profanity, and culture—this is the Trinity of principles which constitutes the creed of

the Century. You must be a firm believer in each, or else you will inevitably be black-balled when your friend condescendingly puts you up.

Of the hundred members aforesaid, a very decent proportion consists of young men fresh from or resident at the Universities, who have recently been advanced to the honour of fellowships. It may be questioned whether there exists on the face of this earth a more utterly detestable specimen of humanity than the junior fellow of the approved type of the day. Let us look at him as we may see him at the Century. Take the example of Smiffle, as accomplished a mixture of flippant atheism, obtrusive profanity, and shallow philosophy as you could meet with in any of the Common Rooms of Oxford. That Smiffle is in possession of the three hundred a-year which his College Endowment gives him, because he has taken a solemn vow to the effect that he believes in the established form of faith, weighs nothing with him. Why, the very day that the examining fellows of Boniface came to the conclusion that Smiffle had undeniably given evidence of the shrewdest head and the most comprehensive knowledge of any candidate in, and had communicated their decision to the Master of Boniface, this last-mentioned dignitary, who had heard some rather quaint stories of Smiffle's religious views, sent for him previous to ratifying his election, in order that he might interrogate him on this sacred subject. Smiffle duly received the message, and, curiously enough, at the same time an intimation from one of the Boniface fellows

of its purpose. What did Smiffle do? Before walking to Boniface he went up into the room of a certain friend of his in which a number of his contemporaries were met together, and said, with all that ostentatious profanity of which he is such a master, "Will any of you fellows coach me up in some religious opinions? Old Duffin, of Boniface, has sent for me to talk them over." And Smiffle's request was hailed with a laugh which showed that the joke was considered excellent. So Smiffle saw the Master of Boniface, and contrived to answer his questions satisfactorily.

"Well, Smiffle," was the query when, the interview over, this hero walked back into Balliol, "how did you get on?"

"Capitally," replied Smiffle, "I absolutely humbugged old Duffin into thinking that I believed in Christianity."

And we are sorry to say that to this day this brilliant achievement of Smiffle's is considered in Balliol one of the cleverest things ever done.

Whenever you go into the Century, on the occasion of the Sunday evening assemblage, you may be sure of meeting plenty of members of the Smiffle type—young men whose conceit is offensive and whose doxosophism is intolerable. Of all the many kinds of cant now in vogue, the cant of intellect is the most utterly odious; and if you hear Smiffle and his friends, in the shrill treble tones which the set affect, airing their arguments that in another shape were exploded years ago—*à propos*, of the existence of the Deity, or the necessary imbecility of Conservatism—

if you note carefully the smug air of infallibility and of satisfaction with which they range through the whole gamut of themes sacred and profane, you will probably walk away with the conviction that in the whole range of your experience you have never listened to such a contemptible set of blasphemous young pedants and prigs. For pedants and prigs of the most consummate kind these young men, the self-appointed apostles of Comte, with their big prattle about the religion of humanity, and the all-sufficiency of culture, are. Byronism was a hateful phase enough, some quarter of a century ago, in the rising generation, but Comtism is ten times more so.

And an unwavering belief in the creed of Comtism is the sum of the articles which make up the avowed faith of the members of the Century Club. There is our friend there whom we have seen already, First Principles, deep in conversation probably with Smiffle, or perhaps with Professor Smithson, who will be remembered probably by our readers in connection with the apology he made some two years since for the execrable deeds of the villain Broadhead. We have had occasion before this to show pretty plainly what First Principles' literary conscience, as he is pleased to term it, is really worth, when put to the test of facts; and so, if you please, we will pass over the fulsome expatiation upon the *morale* of literature to which he is now treating Professor Smithson. "Too plausible by half: this man is certainly a rascal." To paraphrase the line in the play, it is not too much to lay down as a maxim, that directly a man in

the world of literature commences to talk to you of his principles, it is well to put your hand in your pocket and feel if your purse is safe.

But we may quit the Century, with its formidable array of sham philosophers, pseudo-sages, pedants, doxosophists, and prigs. We will introduce the reader to certain other societies which, though by no means devoid of pretensions to consideration on intellectual grounds, have for their primary purpose the creation and preservation of good fellowship.

Walk, then, to the Piazza, Covent Garden. A little bit to the right of the famous supper-rooms, whose founder was a Mr. Evans, but whose present enterprising proprietor is a certain Mr. Green, you will be confronted by a cosy old-fashioned hostelry. Proceed up-stairs—we are starting upon the assumption that the night is that of Saturday, on which day only the club meets—and you will enter the club-room of the Buffers. Of tavern societies this is undoubtedly the most attractive. From an antiquarian and a literary point of view it has claims to respect which are not possessed by other institutions of a like character. It was here that Douglas Jerrold flashed forth some of his best things—here that Thackeray loved to unbend the severe bow of satire that itself cannot be always kept strung. To this day the Buffers retains much of its ancient prestige. It is more free than might have been expected from that admixture of literary pigmies which is enough to utterly damn any convivial society in

London. Whom have we there to-night? The company does not number more than some six or seven, all of whom are solemnly collected round a spacious mahogany table, and sedately smoking long clay pipes. The chair is occupied—we are adverting, by-the-by, to a period of twelve months since—by a gentleman who, in his own particular line, is or was without a rival amongst the *littérateurs* of the metropolis. It is none other than Eglinton Conyers, Esq., “a cadet, sir, of one of the most ancient families of the kingdom.” If you want a pedigree or a classical quotation, Conyers is the man. No trifling with the facts with him. The flippant pretender to ancient lineage has just about as much chance of escaping with his imposture undetected when submitted to the all-penetrating gaze of Conyers, as the Crystal Palace would have of retaining its pristine beauty if it were brought within range for half-an-hour of a choice selection of Armstrong guns. There is a capital story told at the Buffers, *à propos* of the scathing way in which Conyers, on one occasion, showed up a Cockney whose name was Addison, and who was laying boisterous claim to the possession of the great essayist as his progenitor. They met; ’t was in the crowd of a fish dinner at—not to put too fine a point on it—Billingsgate. The Cockney was objectionable, and in the language of Conyers—“I felt, sir, that he must be promptly put down.” The decision and the action were simultaneous.

“With reference, sir, to your statement,” interposed our friend Eglinton, who had prudently waited for his oppor-

tunity, "that you are descended from Addison of the 'Spectator'—the 'Spectator,' sir, that was written by gentlemen, not that hepthemeral periodical now published in Wellington Street—these are the remarks which I have to make. In the first place, Addison died leaving issue only one daughter, and as she was an imbecile I am free to confess that it might add some plausibility to your statement; but, sir, seeing that she died before the age of puberty, it is—a lie."

Conyers' object was entirely accomplished, and the Cockney was very completely "shut up" indeed.

There is not, or—alas! that we should say so—there was not, a man in London more accomplished and more instructive as a conversationalist, no one who had a finer critical sense, a more subtle appreciation of epigram, a more profound knowledge of and respect for our English literature, or a more wholesome admiration of the classics, —and let us say not merely that species of worthless admiration which is born of the distance that enchantment lends to the view,—for Conyers is an excellent scholar. To sum up the whole matter, he is a man of letters, and as such very distinct from those odious creatures who are merely literary men. In his day, too, he has done good service in enforcing this distinction: for which reason, if for no other, his absence from London is to be regretted by all who had hoped that Grub Street was entirely swept from off the face of this earth.

That gentleman with the sharp-set features seated next

to Eglinton Conyers, Esq., with a dark countenance, bushy eyebrows, and penetrating eyes, is Henry Stathos, a well-known writer on all sanitary themes, and the conductor of one of the most influential medical journals of the day. Next to him you have Mr. Caustic Tonans, who is, or till very lately was, the editor of the 'Parthenon,' that weekly organ of literary criticism before which all publishers bow the knee in trepidation and in terror. Mr. Tonans well knows the value and the opportunities of his post, and is accordingly one of the most indefatigable of bookmakers—we use the word in a literary and not in a sporting sense—in London. When he takes his autumn holiday it is to travel in some direction in which he may find material for a two-volume work; and on his return to London he has an interview with a publisher, draws up an agreement, and is presented with a cheque on account for a very respectable sum. There is nothing particular to say as to the demeanour or conversation of either of these; they take their fluids in an appreciative but not eager manner, and listen quietly while Eglinton expounds some new theory which he has lucubrated over his tenth tumbler—his head, by-the-by, is as clear as the hand-bell with which he rings for the waiter to order yet another—of blood and culture; the identity between good breeding and good faith; the unimpeachably blue blood that flowed in the veins of the founders of Christianity, or of something else to the same effect. The party is made up of a few sedate elders in literature and medicine, who talk

little, think presumably a good deal, and drink in proportion.

Let us quit the Buffers, and betake ourselves elsewhere.

We are still in the land of nondescript clubs—of clubs which, having a name, have only half a local habitation, or at best but an apology for a whole one. About the Buffers there was an atmosphere of sound old-fashioned *génialité*: and the members of the Buffers, if not all of them noticeable for their literature, their intellect, or their achievements, were pleasant boon-companions and gentlemen. We are now, however, going to descend to the very lowest depth which our modern club system has reached—to the most objectionable species of imitation which is to be found now amongst us of the clubs of the olden times, at which Jonson presided, or at which, to come down to a later date, Rich cracked his jokes and Captain Morris sang his lays. Not exactly perhaps “in the worst inn’s worst room” do these parasitic growths upon the institution of our modern club life make themselves periodically manifest; but essentially the reverse of respectable themselves, their outward semblance of respectability is a sham.

When it is remembered that the gentlemen constituting these clubs belong to the bastard order of London Bohemians, it will be readily understood that there may be another reason which renders this obscurity in the matter of the head-quarters that they select advisable. Bohe-

mianism is an almost synonymous term with habitual impecuniosity, and habitual impecuniosity is apt to implant in the bosoms of its victims a wholesome dread of the sheriff's officer. On the whole therefore it is quite as well for the members of these societies to keep judiciously dark. An amusing illustration of this occurred not long since. A certain friend of a gentleman belonging to one of these petty pot-house clubs, situated, we believe, somewhere or other in the Strand, received an invitation from him to be a guest at the weekly dinner of the club, but failed to ask him for the address. The day came, and the stranger found he knew not where to go. As a last and unfailing resource, he inquired at a certain theatrical warehouse in the neighbourhood of Wellington Street where precisely the house of call was, a majority of the members of the establishment being in one way or another connected with the theatrical profession. He inquired, we say, but the reply given him was, "No, sir; that is a question which we are strictly enjoined not to answer." "I suppose," said he, shrewdly surmising the motives which prompted the purveyor of histrionic properties, "that you fancy I am a sheriff's officer." The tradesman said nothing, but grinned significantly.

We have instanced, as a pleasing exception to the utterly despicable character of these Arab societies of literary men, the Buffers; we might also mention in the same category a certain little club holding its meetings in

an hotel in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, which has other objects in view than those of a mutual admiration society, and is established for something else than the promotion of periodical boozing amongst its members. The institution to which we allude fulfils many of the purposes of a benefit society. Should one of its members suddenly die, the survivors lay their heads together, concoct schemes, and carry them out, for the relief of his needy family. Should change of air be prescribed for some one who can ill afford the expense, the hat is sent round, and the necessary funds are got up. All this is legitimate and praiseworthy enough, and everything which tends to make literature a self-supporting guild, independent of the ostentatious and contemptuous charity of the Literary Fund, the existence of which is a scandal and a disgrace to the profession, deserves a panegyric rather than a sneer.

But by far the greater numbers of these pseudo-clubs are detestable in their genesis and odious in their development. They comprise for the main part the tag-rag and bobtail of the so-called intellectual world—the very scum of the representatives of literary and theatrical art—men who, neither earning, nor deserving a reputation, compensate themselves for the want of it by congregating together over spirits-and-water and tobacco, and “taking it out” in a free interchange of adulation. We have in our eye such a society as this at the present moment. The club, let us call it the Zingari—we heartily apologize to

the illustrious band of cricketers known by that nomenclature for thus degrading the word—is held in the upper chamber of a house somewhere in the vicinage of the Strand: a club above, a gin palace below. Let us look around and see whom we have. That gentleman with the obese form and the eruptive countenance, whom you know not most aptly to compare to a satyr or a beer-barrel, is, it is rumoured, the guiding spirit of a recognized Conservative organ. Heavens, that Conservatism should fall into the hands of such men as these. What influence for good can they expect to exert over the masses whom the public press is supposed to instruct? What knowledge have they of our complex English life? What sympathies with the harmonious blending of orders? Their notions of the former are derived from a daily walk down Fleet Street or the Strand; of the latter, from occasionally fraternizing in moments of inebriated jollity with a socially-disposed cabman or bargee. It is an impossibility to possess a wise insight into the art of managing the masses, unless one has at any rate at one period of one's life had the opportunity of associating with gentlemen. If you wish to get an idea of what the surrounding country is, you mount the top of a hill, not descend into a muddy valley; but men like our friend yonder have spent their days in the mud of lower middle-class vulgarity, and now, without the slightest knowledge of the way in which it is to be done, they essay to lead the people through the medium of the press. Verily, Con-

servative journalism has some difficulties against which to contend.

At the Zingari, however, Mr. Chigg—that is the name of this brilliant luminary of the Conservative press—is the centre and focus of attraction. He is engaged just now in laying down the law *à propos* of some subtle question of current politics. A weighty exposition very likely, only it loses a good deal by the fact that Chigg never misses an available opportunity of leaving out an aspirate. Opposite you sit three or four minor actors, all of them at present in want of situations. Their time is spent in fuddling themselves with bad liquors, extolling their individual merits, and bestowing endearing epithets on each other. It may be mentioned that when you hear one of these gentlemen salute his brother-in-arms as “dear boy,” you may declare upon oath that they are mortal enemies. If you glance a little lower down the table you may witness a tournament of pygmy wit. There are three or four contributors to some of the infinitesimally small comic periodicals of the day—young men of a generally unwholesome and repellent appearance, by no means scrupulous as to the cleanliness of their shirt linen or the disposition of their hair—engaged in bandying what they fancy is repartee, and what they delude themselves into believing is epigram. Substitute for either word flippant impudence and you have a fair notion of the conversational calibre of these gentlemen. But we have dwelt long enough upon the scene. We will quit

this tavern booze, and leave the club-room of the Zingari with its atmosphere heated and noxious with the fumes of spirits and villanous cigar smoke ; only an honest desire to introduce the reader to club life in all its aspects, legitimate or illegitimate, ever induced us to enter the apartment.

CHAPTER XVI.

MISCELLANEOUS CLUBS.

Concerning the natural limits of our definition—The principles which have guided us in the selection of typical Clubs—White's Club—Brooks's Club—Connection of each with politics of the day—Conservative Club—Wholesome duties which it has performed—Glimpses of Arthur's—Military Clubs—Prime elements in their *personnel*—The Rag—Capt. Rattler—Episode of the 'Firefly'—The Naval and Military—The Guards' Club—Minor Military Clubs—Their general character—The Somerset Club—The Breakfast scene—Capt. Flamley—Capt. Flimsy Sloper and Major Levant at Pyramids—The Major *v.* the Sheriff's officer—The Raleigh Club on the eve of the Derby—Billiards at the Cocoa Tree Club—The Afternoon Sweepstakes—A visit to the Portland Club—"Terrible Suicide of a City Banker."

IF, in this department of our work, we were not to be allowed to raise the cry of "it is finished," until we have fairly exhausted every conceivable establishment, to which by any possibility the word "club" is applicable, when could we consider that our labour had been conscientiously performed? "The Club"—why three volumes of very respectable magnitude might be filled with a mere enumeration of the purposes aimed at by the various societies laying claim to this nomenclature within the metropolis alone. If it were necessary for us to lavish upon our readers full descriptions of the social life observable within

all institutions nominally included under this term, where should we end? Ought we, we want to know, to go into the whole theory of Benefit Clubs and upon their influences, advantageous or otherwise, upon those classes from whom their members are drafted? Should we be expected to expatiate upon the whole rationale of betting clubs, from Tattersall's to the Bentinck, or from the Bentinck down to the promiscuous gatherings which meet together within the friendly shelter of the neighbouring tobacconist's shop; and which, for the same indulgence of their social instincts are compelled to put in a very punctual appearance at the police court in the immediate vicinage on the following morrow? Should we by rights investigate at length,—presenting our readers with equally lengthy results of such investigations,—the myriad debating clubs, which the ambitious apprentices and the eloquent shop-boys of London are always ready to get up in any of our highways and byways?

Then, are there not cricket clubs innumerable, yachting clubs, boating clubs, foot-ball clubs, croquet clubs, and Heaven knows how many other species of clubs formed for the propagation of an infinite number of modes of physical relaxation and enjoyment? If we have dwelt on the aristocratic Carlton, why not dwell on the not less aristocratic Gun Club, or on the moderately select society over which that illustrious cricketer, Mr. Fitzgerald, rules supreme? Why, it may be asked, should we not treat of all these institutions, in pursuit of the boundless theme

which we have proposed to ourselves? Are we so altogether materialistic in our views as to refuse to believe that the idea of club is incapable of development save in the shape of so much solid concretion of bricks and mortar—that unless the essence of the thing be straightway pounced upon and imprisoned within a structure, of stone and clay subsisting, it is altogether unworthy of notice in these pages?

Yet even judged by this test, accepting it as a maxim that a club proper must be a house as well, the treatise upon which we have already so far advanced would be lamentably incomplete. Have we not as yet passed by unmentioned many of not the least illustrious club-houses of London? Have we presented our reader with any faithful picture of the internal life of Brooks's, of the domestic arrangements of Boodle's, and of the general economy of White's? Nay, on the subject of establishments so representative in character as the Army and Navy, the two United Services, the Naval and Military, what have we had to say? Why has there been no place of honour accorded in these our writings to Arthur's, or to the Travellers', to the Conservative, to the Arlington, to the Stafford, the Cocoa Tree, or to Pratt's? "Fellow has nothing to say about us," lisps a young subaltern, flushed with the glory and excitement of having just achieved his entrance into the Raleigh. "Nor about us," remarks our friend Obadiah Jeremy, bill-discounter and stock-broker, elate with a sense of his importance at

having recently been made a member of the Purple House. Well, we may as well frankly confess it, if we have been in the opinion of some guilty of more than one error on the side of commission, we can by no means hold ourselves innocent in the matter of sins of omission. True, our work without certain all-important supplements would be lamentably incomplete. We should be open to the charge of one-sidedness, partiality, and who shall say what else. In this chapter then we will endeavour, so far as within us lies, to repair our guilt. Only too happy shall we be if those societies, whom we here venture to class together, agree to exclaim in unanimous chorus, as an acknowledgment of the earnest and practical desire to right ourselves in their eyes: "And doth not a meeting like this make amends?"

What it behoves us first to say, with reference to the charge of partiality and imperfection of treatment which may be brought against us, is that it is our object rather to present the reader with representative types, than with an exhaustive portrait gallery of clubs, club life, and club characters in general. We have therefore, so far as our powers go, adopted the Baconian system and searched for pregnant instances. We have taken what we believe to be the most *prononcés* specimens and the most characteristic examples. We have confined our visits mainly to those clubs which in our judgment, at the same time that they possess strongly defined features of their own, are also calculated to afford the stranger an adequate idea of the

social life and usages that prevail at other establishments as well. Even as it is, it has not been possible wholly to steer clear of monotony and repetition. Were we to extend our descriptive chapters much more, we should inevitably find ourselves bewildered in a hopeless maze of reproduction.

If we were to spend an afternoon in the reading-room at Brooks's, or were to stroll into White's for the purpose of seeing the heir apparent to the throne—a member of this excellently managed establishment, and a tolerably regular *habitué*—sipping his soda and cognac at say 5 P.M., we should find little more of novelty than we have already encountered in our lounges at the Carlton or the Reform. At White's you may indeed come across a strong contingent of four-in-hand-driving nobles and fox-preserving dukes and squires, not to be met with elsewhere. You may hear unimpeachably correct opinions on the present condition of coverts in the various counties of England, Ireland, and Scotland as you sit in the bay-window; may hear his Grace summing up the salient heads of the last aristocratic scandal, or the Marquis of Poyntz dogmatizing on the subject of the running of two year-olds. You may hear, too, comparisons drawn, not a few, by venerable peers encircled up to their throats with voluminous masses of white neckcloth, between the politics of the present day and the politics of the past period,—when Tories were Tories, Whigs, Whigs, and Liberal Conservatism was an abomination that had not yet lifted up its head. You

may hear frequent criticisms about the tactics of the Conservative party as it now is ; and had you been present in the immediate neighbourhood of this same bay-window when Mr. Disraeli was carrying his Reform Bill through the House, you would have heard these high-born *laudatores temporis acti*, in tones of horror and disgust, want to know what was coming next, and rail incontinently at the present system of party leadership. The political school—for White's, though not primarily a political school nor a party club, has yet a distinct political character—of which White's may be regarded as the organized expression has almost arrived at the fossil stage. It is not the Conservatism of the present day—not the Conservatism of the Carlton—or of the club which derives its name from that of the principles which it upholds. Roughly speaking, it is the incarnation and embodiment of the obstructive Toryism of the past ; and the sooner that we can obliterate the word Tory from our political vocabulary, the better for the constitution. You may indeed find at White's a fair sprinkling of our *jeunesse dorée*, of the young representatives of the rising generation of aristocrats. But these and such as these belong to the club simply in virtue of its social prestige. White's is pre-eminently the haunt of territorial magnates and grandees, and so long as it continues to preserve this character, the heirs and owners of broad acres and ancestral halls will put in an appearance there. The real qualification for White's is social. The Reform Bill of 1832 robbed the institution

of such weight and active power in the political world as it may once have had. Not all the select cliques and aristocratic coteries that gather together in the bay of the window overlooking St. James's Street would avail to check the advancing tide of political thought or to divert the legislative current from its popular course.

Very nearly what has been said of White's is applicable to Brooks's. A political power Brooks's has ceased to be, simply because the school of whose principles it was once the corporate exponent has become extinct. The Whig aristocracy of England may be a social power still—not a political. Their club therefore is denuded of its political attributes, and retains only its social dignity. Just as it is the natural thing for a scion of one of the old Tory families to belong to White's, so it is for the offshoot of an old Whig branch to take refuge in the comfortable seclusion of Brooks's. Points, however, there are in which the analogy between the two institutions fails to hold good. White's, on the whole, is infinitely more select than the old Whig club. There are few *novi homines*—none of your soap-boilers, flashy directors, upstart capitalists who have gone into Parliament purely in the spirit of speculation. At Brooks's, however, these are elements which are more or less represented, and Whig pride, proverbial though it is, has been no bar against their entrance. But though these gentlemen are here, they do not materially affect the tone of political

sentiment of the club,—a sentiment in which there is a sufficiently small modicum of sympathy with the Radicalism, advanced Liberalism, and what not else of the present day. The confidence placed in Mr. Gladstone by those gentlemen, who still retain the comfortable old-fashioned Whig traditions in which they were brought up, is of a very half-hearted character indeed ; and in the atmosphere of the club the influence of these traditions preponderates. As for Mr. Bright, he is—well, exactly the antithesis of the ideal of these political quidnuncs. For them the stream of politics in these latter days flows far too swiftly. Time-honoured landmarks are swept away with alarming completeness. The condition of perpetual flux, in which all things seem to be, terrifies these respectable gentlemen, who repose absolute faith in the creed of Whiggism. They sit in their clubs discussing impossible renovations of the old creed, canvassing the chances of some Whig noble, grey and bent with age, being called upon to form a ministry, and debating whether the organization of a new and popular party may not be even yet on the cards. Now and again some parvenu of the order which we have described, who has worked his way into the club, Heaven only knows by what secret influence, will write a letter to the papers, full of the most advanced propositions, and date from Brooks's. But he does not represent the sentiments of the institution ; scarcely would the writer himself venture to express them aloud when upon the premises. And then, so far as regards real living influence upon the

political world, the Brooks's shares the fate of the White's, and is as the small chaff in the balance.

Excellent, too, in all points as a club, the Conservative is; the principles of detailed description which we have laid down above do not require that we should lay much stress upon it here. It takes no very active part in politics. It is simply an exceedingly well-managed and comfortably organized social rendezvous for gentlemen entertaining kindred public sentiments—dear to the hearts of country squires; the delight of gentlemen of mature years; who form a conspicuous element, by the way, in its composition, as they do in that of the Union Club in Trafalgar Square, possessed of an unimpeachable *cuisine* and of an unusually handsome and well-shaped entrance hall. Within the last few years its committee have achieved a certain amount of reputation for wholesome stringency and salutary supervision. When in the general election of 1865 Mr. Mill came forward for Westminster, a certain member of the club now in question, smitten with an admiration for the intellectual powers of the author of a 'Treatise on Logic,' allowed his name to be put down on the philosopher's committee. This it seemed to the managing body of the institution was distinctly in contravention of their fundamental law—that the members of the Conservative Club should be constant in their loyalty to the Conservative creed in all matters of political action. A general meeting was accordingly called, and the gentleman in question was punctually expelled.


The second occasion to which we allude is one of more recent date, and much wider notoriety. It will be enough to speak of this instance of the just severity of the committee of the Conservative Club as satisfactory establishing the fact that the nineteenth-century journalist who endeavours to reproduce the abusive scurrility and calumnious malignance of the period of the 'Age' and the 'Satirist' deserves the most unsparing social stigma with which he can possibly be branded. In these days, when it is an exceedingly difficult question to know how certain crimes of conduct should be visited most appropriately, it is satisfactory to discover that a club committee is able effectually to exercise the functions of a court of honour.

We may quit the theme of the Conservative. To pass by its next door neighbour, Arthur's—one of the oldest and best of London clubs, as it is certainly one of the most select homes of the youthful Talleyrands of the day, one of the most chosen haunts of rising diplomatists from F. O., or of private secretaries fresh from official residences in Downing Street, primed to overflowing with the very latest items of political news, and the most recently manufactured details of political potentialities; some moderately effusive in their bearing and conversation, others the very embodiments of Parliamentary reticence, such for instance, as our friend Mr. Marmaduke Neville, to whom, standing at the open window, while he toys daintily with his well-kept moustache, and beams with self-satisfac-

tion, as who would say he was in possession of the secrets of the universe, and without whom, in his own opinion, the Queen's Government could ill be carried on, we nod as we pass; with its sprinkling of marvellously well-preserved old dandies, its stiff and starched martinets, naval alike and military, who are complaining to each that "the service, sir, is going to the devil, sir;" to leave unmentioned in our story the troop of well-dressed young men belonging to the very best sets in London, who stroll in and out of the door; not even to bestow a word on the quiet and extremely comfortable little dinners, served and eaten in that coffee-room, which is the snuggest in town; not to record so much as a single item of the talk, or to attempt to remember one of the little anecdotes told in the smoking-room last night—and both the talk and the anecdotes of the smoking-room at Arthur's are great features, we promise you, of that nearly ideal establishment; to preserve, we repeat, a silence profound and impenetrable as the countenance of the sphinx on each and all of these themes, simply because there is no special reason why we should dilate upon them more in connection with Arthur's than with many other of our London clubs, let us proceed to the task of visiting certain other establishments which may be accepted as specimens typical or representative of a class.

The military and naval clubs of London are an extensive order; of one kind or another, more important or

less, illustrious or obscure, reputable or disreputable, they are scarcely fewer than a score in number. Yet in the most prominent of these it is difficult to recognize any specially characteristic features. You may be a tolerably regular *habitué* at the Rag, at the Junior or Senior United Service, without observing anything calculated in any special degree forcibly to remind you that you are in the presence of the heroes of a hundred fights, or of well-seasoned sailors who have braved any amount of battle and of breeze. The first thing to be said about these clubs is that they are mainly composed of men to whom war's alarms is a meaningless phrase, so far as any possibility of actually participating in the pomp and circumstance of campaigning goes; who have, in fact, left the service and have devoted the residue of their days to pursuits of a distinctly non-bellicose description. Veterans who have known each other as midshipmen in the Baltic, or who first struck up acquaintanceship during the initial stages of their career at Hong Kong, in the Pacific or Caribbean Sea, any time while the present century was yet, figuratively speaking, in its cradle, revelling now in the luxury of pensions and ease, dividing their time pretty equally between the club and their own firesides; bronzed old warriors who have fought side by side in the Peninsula, and who showed themselves at Sobraon worthy of the spurs which were won at Talavera, whose exits and entrances at the club are timed with the military precision which has become to them a second nature—these and



such as these will assemble in select knots to discuss the abuses of the Admiralty or the administration of the Horse Guards ; to contrast the state of things in general now with that which prevailed " 'tis sixty years since ;" to satirize the system which proceeds upon the absurd supposition that " to pass an examination in a lot of confounded book-learning " implies the presence of the stuff out of which stout campaigners and bold soldiers are made ; mutually to agree that what we want as a panacea for all this and much else of the same kind is a good universal war, which shall shake Europe from its base ; or to interchange sympathies on the matter of their country's ingratitude, in that they have the greatest difficulty in procuring gratuitous commissions for their sons. Plenty of gentlemen are there of this description at the clubs which we have mentioned readily knowable and pleasantly conspicuous. But for these, as we have said, the time of fighting is gone by. The sword is hung up, the sabre is rusted, and their favourite charger years since reached that advanced stage of superannuation which caused one morning the sharp crack of the pistol to be heard in their paddock.

We proceed principally in order of seniority. Next to these veterans of the fleet and of the field, who repose snugly on their well-earned laurels, we have in all clubs of " the services " a large contingent of members, the juniors indeed of that class upon which we have just dwelt, but who, like them, have bidden a final farewell to

the active duties of their profession. These are the men who went into the army only for a short time, got sick of the whole thing almost as soon as they had received their commission, threw it all up, and sold out. What is the tented battle-field to them, or they to it? What care they for the jobbing of the Horse Guards, or the last Blue Book issued by the Council of Military Education? Members, indeed, of an army club they are, but military their sympathies are not. The Rag is a capital place. They like the dinners, and the afternoon whist, and the comfort that prevails all over the establishment. Multitudinous are the variations of this order of *emeriti*—from Capt. Flash, whose income is derived from a regular attendance at all the race meetings of England, a whole host of small speculations, and to whom the social prestige, which membership of the Rag imparts, is worth in its way a modest but steadily remunerative income—down to Mr. Ferdinand Felix: he, too, was a captain once, but has dropped the title now: who has exchanged the pursuit of arms for that of science and literature in uninterrupted tranquillity. Then we have gentlemen who, the sword laid down for ever, have made commerce their *métier*, men of the stamp of Major Debenture and Col. Stock, to be seen regularly hovering about every morning in the neighbourhood of Lombard Street, always full of some new company just about to be started, and perpetually dazzled by visions of fabulous wealth to be dug up from phantom mines. Others, again, there are

whose normal state is that of endless intrigue for political power. Mr. Flowett has been known to remark before now that some of his most auriferous flies have flown to him from the regions of the Rag. Others, too, not less bustling in their avocations, the acme of whose ambition it is to start a theatre or to develop a journal. Of this nature were the aspirations of our friend Capt. Rattler. Capt. Rattler was in search of a new excitement. The whist at the Rag was not enough: even the Arlington palled upon him. As for the turf, what with the whole season's failures—to say nothing of the final *fiasco* of the Cockamaroo episode—he was fairly sick of it. One day somebody told the Captain that the 'Firefly' was in the market. "'Firefly,' you know, the paper: comes out in the evening,—always commences with the sixth edition, and winds up with the sixtieth. Devilish nice little paper: heaps of theatrical and racing news. Should think with a little management it might be made a property. Go in for it, Rattler, and we'll have it ordered at the club." In for it according the Captain went, and horribly disgusted the gallant gentleman was because it did not bring him in a fortune at once, and because it required a little money occasionally to be spent on it.

"You infernal scoundrel," playfully commented the Captain, who was charmingly free-and-easy in his talk, to the friend who had urged upon him some time since the purchase of the 'Firefly,' "what on earth made you advise me to buy that cursed paper?"

"Be a success yet, Rattler," responded the gentleman thus addressed ; "see if it won't. A paper wants building just as much as a house."

"House property for me, by George!" said the Captain, who was—he had absolutely been proprietor of the journal in question for upwards of three months—beginning to get sick of the 'Firefly,' as he had got sick of most other things. "Why," continued Capt. Rattler, with an oath, "it don't pay my current expenses at my afternoon whist."

"No wonder, my boy," was the reply, "and won't do so either yet awhile if you make such a clean sweep of the till every day. You should let your engine consume its own smoke for a while."

But this was an exhortation the force of which the Captain did not see, or a figure the meaning of which his intellect did not qualify him to understand. The brilliancy of the 'Firefly,' soon became dimmed, and after a short delay gradually expired. Captain Rattler, consequently, will deliver himself, any afternoon you like, of a series of vigorous anathemas against all journalistic enterprises, and when last we heard of him was very hot upon some "good thing" on which he had been "put" in the City. "Damn newspapers! I hate the whole infernal lot of them," remarked the Captain ; "guinea points and City directorships are about my game now."

'Tis a marked characteristic this of gentlemen who have once adopted as their profession the defence of their

country, that they are seldom able quietly to settle down to the monotony of a single pursuit. They must have variety. A restless activity has become to them a second nature. They are seldom satisfied unless they are in pursuit of a chimera, or engaged in following a phantom. They are ever dazzled by the *ignis fatuus* of some hopelessly impossible project, never care about the dry light of the practicable and the possible. After all, Captain Rattler is but a type of his class—by no means a *reductio ad absurdum* of it.

If to the orders we have described you add the class of men who are home from foreign service, or who perpetually flit in and out of the establishment on the occasion of their tolerably numerous trips to town from quarters situated within what the advertisements call an easy railway journey of the metropolis, our enumeration of the list of members of the Rag and other such institutions will be sufficiently complete. For the satisfaction of these gentlemen generally there is a marked absence among their number of the extremely junior officer. If you want to witness, in the plenitude of his objectionable prominence, the youngster who has just joined his regiment, if you wish to notice the arrogant absurdities of which the youth is capable, you must go elsewhere. The species is a tolerably common one at the Naval and Military Club. Located in what was Cambridge House, in Piccadilly, you can there see the forced fastness of these young gentlemen, their airs, their emptiness, and

conceit; you can make a mental inventory of the material out of which our future field-m Marshals are to be made, and if as you do so you are disposed to feel sceptical as to the alleged excessive difficulty of the military examinations which these burning and shining lights have passed, you will not fail to remember that physiognomy is by no means an infallible index of mind, nor refuse to exercise a sufficient amount of charity to suppose that the retreating forehead and the vacant eye may be not incompatible with the existence of considerable intellectual attainments. But as for these youngsters, their bumptiousness, and their inanity, are they not written in the book of Thackeray?

Military and naval clubs,—we use the phrase in its general, and not in its accidentally special significance—are, as we have hinted, of various kinds and degrees. Those which we have already visited may be considered public clubs. They are establishments of which every one has heard, of conspicuous celebrity and consequently of well-ascertained repute. When we investigate the subject of the many minor military clubs which exist in London, the ground becomes more doubtful. While we were at the United, the Rag, or Cambridge House, we at any rate knew that the well-dressed men-about-town—ever lounging on the steps, smoking, and chatting on the last theatrical novelty, the newest racing *esclandre*, the freshest fashionable scandal—were, in the enjoyment of their caste, unimpaired and entire. Curious things might be whispered of one or two; but still it was perfectly safe to

be seen speaking to them. The chit-chat to which we listened in the smoking-room might occasionally assume something of an azure hue, but it was well-bred. In a word, we have been all along in the society of gentlemen, and consequently we have felt ourselves perfectly safe in their hands. In the case of the smaller and less considerable military clubs to which we are about to introduce ourselves, all this is changed. We must pick our way carefully. We must be on the *qui vive* as to whom to speak to, bow to, dine with, and avoid.

We had almost suffered ourselves to perpetrate an error for which no explanation could atone and no apology be sufficient. Heaven forbid that we should, by any oversight, be thought guilty of including in this category that society of aristocratic military loungers who scan from their bay window, with such *insouciant* air, the tide of existence as it ebbs and flows down Pall Mall, who are *par excellence* THE depositaries of all the most select gossip of the metropolis, who are perfectly up in the latest scandals of high life, and who have a perfect sheaf of anecdotes ready to rise to their lips *à propos* of each carriage, laden with its fair feminine freight, that may roll by. The importance, celebrity, and prestige of the Guards' Club are altogether apart from its size. Nor even in the case of many other minor military clubs is it possible to cast the slightest shadow of doubt upon their unblemished character and spotless repute; we refer here merely to the bulk of those social institutions

advertised as the Grenville, the Somerset, the Murray Clubs, and by what not other name?—for officers of the army and navy, “entrance fee, three guineas, annual subscription two,”—which spring up mysteriously, no one knows beneath whose auspices, and which are the result of the enterprising spirit of a private proprietor rather than the spontaneous association of gentlemen. Take the Somerset Club for instance: that is a fair specimen of the class. Enter the house, situated somewhere between Piccadilly and Oxford Street, and in one of the thoroughfares that run at right angles to the Burlington Arcade. The place is pervaded by an odour of stale cigars. In lieu of the keen-eyed, intelligent porter, you have at the entrance a filmy-visioned waiter, with pasty countenance and grimy neckcloth. You pass into a morning-room, with the papers and writing-materials; on the same floor is a coffee-room: but how different from the apartments bearing those titles in which we have recently been. You have a general impression—and your impression is tolerably correct—that dirt reigns everywhere. The glasses are dull, the whiteness of the table-cloths are several degrees removed from that of snow; the one or two youths who do duty for waiters have a lacklustre look; and the aspect of the one or two gentlemen who are regaling themselves on devilled kidneys or anchovies, washed down by bitter ale, entirely follows suit. There is a strained flashiness about their dress, just as there is a dismally forced hilarity in their talk; but their

features are haggard and worn, and the eruptive visage and the little pods beneath the eyes tell of late hours, irregular living, and far too regular indulgence in spirituous liquors.

"Two goes of brandy, William," remarks a gentleman who walks with a rather tremulous gait into the room, and, his order supplied, lifts the glass with an ominously shaky hand to his lips. "Damn it," this *viveur*, the cognac greedily drained, goes on to remark, "there's nothing like it in the morning. I'll be cursed if I'm fit for anything till I take this stuff!" and the gentleman in question elevates himself to his full height in proof of the soundness of the observation.

"Must say myself," laconically responds the dilapidated youth who is endeavouring to dispatch his kidney, to whom these remarks have been addressed, "that I prefer a 'spider'—bad thing to take your spirits neat."

"Rot!" is the elegant answer, "there's nothing like brandy raw before breakfast; pulls you together, you know; seems to screw a nut into the back of your head. I'll be cursed if I'm not good for any mortal thing now."

As for the hypothetical portion of this proposition, you may feel disposed to controvert it, though you will not probably deny mentally the applicability of the categorical. The gentleman who is thus invigorated by the water of life is not a pleasant sight to look upon. Who is he? Till very recently, when he was compelled by the Jews to sell out, he held Her Majesty's commission in the — reg-

ment of foot. His name is Captain Flamley, a member of a well-known Loamshire family, who has been going all his life to the bad, and who, now that he is thirty years of age, must, you are strongly of opinion, almost have reached his destination. So long as our friend was merely wild, extravagant, and dissipated, matters were not serious. He could still associate with gentlemen. But somehow or other an ugly story got abroad as to the manner in which Ensign Pigeon managed to lose over two thousand pounds at loo one evening in Flamley's rooms. It is true there was nothing at all amounting to proof of foul play; but there was suspicion, and suspicion needs not be corroborated to be damning. Then there were one or two other rather curious rumours with regard to Flamley's doings last year at Newmarket, and altogether our friend received a tolerably large amount of cold shoulder. Fellows fought shy of him at the Rag; the distant nod replaced the hearty salutation; and even that was soon superseded by the dead cut. "Hang it, you know," was the verdict of club opinion, "you must draw the line somewhere, and Flamley has got into a devilish seedy lot."

Seedy enough, in all conscience! So seedy that before two or three months were over Capt. Flamley removed his name from the books of the Army and Navy Club. He then lead a nondescript existence in public billiard-rooms and tavern parlours in the neighbourhood of the Haymarket. Then the Somerset Club was formed, and Flamley joined, and here he is now.

Seedy, in truth: that is precisely the epithet for the whole institution, with its different contents, whether in the way of humanity or furniture. Seedy are the reputations of the men who make up the list of members: seedy are their characters, seedy their whole lives. There is occasionally a matchless eloquence in slang. It is enjoyed by the adjective of whose expressiveness we have availed ourselves.

Upstairs you will find the billiard-room and smoking-room, and one or two card-rooms. Look in at the first. Captain Flimsy Sloper and Major Levant are playing a game of pyramids. 'Tis a case of diamond cut diamond. No unfair play there, simply because they are old hands. Honour among thieves indeed! But why? Because they are far too wide-awake to render dishonesty a possibility within their own circle. 'Tis making a virtue of necessity. You fancy you are familiar with the faces of these gentlemen. Possibly; for their countenances are typical ones. Go to the betting-ring of any meeting you like, and you will see plenty of celebrities of the Flimsy Sloper and Levant order. Doubtless you know them well enough: how could you help it? Who does not know the hard metallic visage, the restless, heartlessly-innocent look, the quick, piercing eye, the keen, vulture-like air which marks the harpies of the ring? Sloper and Levant, it is needless to say, have left the service long ago; so indeed have most of the *habitués* of military clubs of the kind to which the Somerset belongs. The race-course,

the billiard-table, and the card-room—that is the trinity of their career. You are right ; you do know the faces of these men, and such as these, well ; and here you have at last unearthed them in their club. There is a certain amount of humour in the idea.

Curiously uncertain in their movements are these gentlemen. In the words of Tristram Shandy's scullion, they "are here to-day and there to-morrow." London indeed it is at the present moment ; but should the coming Monday be settling day after some race-meeting of the week, at which our friend has lost heavily, who knows that when that Monday comes the alarming intelligence may not run round certain sporting circles, in which what is known as the colour of his money is a tint whose appearance is eagerly looked for, that Captain Flimsy Sloper has, in the words of Mr. Longfellow, "folded his tents like the Arabs, and as silently stolen away ;" or, in less poetic parlance, has levanted to Boulogne.

What a life!—duns, dishonour, and debt ! By this time Captain Sloper and the Major have finished their game, the Captain winning by a couple of balls. A stroll is suggested : and warily, very warily indeed, the pair prepare to issue through the club doorway into the street. Why this caution ? It is needed on both sides. As for the Captain, he is engaged in a desperate endeavour to dodge a writ ; and for all he knows the process-server may at this present moment be concealed behind one of the pillars of the door, ready to pounce upon him at any

moment, and to present him with the evil-omened, oblong document. As for the Major, his case is a good deal more extreme. Two writs expired yesterday. Judgment was entered against him. He is liable to arrest at any moment: and it is quite on the cards that before he has crossed the street the sheriff's officer, duly furnished with a writ of *ca. sa.*, may make his appearance in front of him. Still the betting is on the side of the Major, for he is sharp-eyed as a lynx, and has acquired a considerable stock of experience in these matters. If you want to defeat a bailiff, Major Levant is the man. "He's such a downy cove, the Major is," observe the myrmidons of Abednego, "there's no knowing what he's up to."

It is a relief to shift the scene, and to feel that we are on the *terra firma* of respectability once more. Bohemianism may be possessed of its own eccentric charms, but the atmosphere is oppressive, and one pants for air. Bohemianism, too, pure and true, is not a state of permanent existence, but rather a transient period of life. We are at the Raleigh, if you please, the pace of whose members is undeniably fast, but whose movements, swift though they be, are not in a direction diametrically opposite to the Englishman's god—Respectability. The Raleigh enjoys the reputation, we may state for the benefit of the uninitiated reader, of being the fastest and the latest club in London. What is the evening which we have selected for our visit? If we wish to see the club, we may as well choose the most favourable occasion.

Clubs, just as much as any other centres of human concourse, or haunts of civilized recreation, have their special field-days, their eventful evenings, and their grand periods. The interior of a political club, to be seen in the full tide of its existence, the very plethora of its being, should be visited by choice when the fate of a cabinet is trembling in the balance, and on each successive bulletin from St. Stephen's an appeal to the country may depend. What a ministerial crisis is to the Carlton or Reform, that the vigil of the Derby is to the Raleigh; and for all practical purposes the whole life of the Raleigh, on such occasions, is concentrated into the smoking-room of the club. There is something very much more than ordinary in the appearance which that apartment presents between the hours of eleven P.M. and two A.M. on the evening immediately preceding the great racing event of the year. A chamber, long, and fairly lofty—a continuous row of luxurious morocco-covered *sedilia* on either side throughout the whole length,—not a vacant place for the too-late comer—an atmosphere heavy with the odorously potent perfumes of Benson's regalias, and clamorous with the notes of speculation—here and there at intervals in front of the line of seats a group of three or four standing, betting-books in hand, toothpicks or cigars in mouth—offers of 5 to 1, and every other phase of odds swiftly made and as swiftly taken—a ceaseless buzz of conversation, intermingled not unfrequently by the sharp pop of an irrepressible cork—salutations essentially English in

their curious mixture of suppressed geniality and simulated reserve between men whose last meeting may have been on the snows of Canada, or beneath the dazzling heat of a tropical sky,—these are among the sights and sounds which the passer-by who strolls into the Raleigh on this eventful evening may notice.

Accidentally the predominant element in the composition of the Raleigh is military, and it is represented with an unusual degree of strength to-night. There is a large muster from all the military camps within anything like an accessible distance of London. From Chatham, Woolwich, and Aldershot, Walmer, Folkestone, and Dover,—nay, from the more remote stations of York, Plymouth, Templemore, Limerick, and who shall say whence else?—have these bronze-faced and tawny-haired champions of the British colours, snatching a hurried leave, gone to town for the Derby. That tall and very erect gentleman yonder, with hair of iron-grey hue, who has just lounged in, and who nods to almost every one in the room—he is one of the best officers in the service, and has seen more work than any colonel in the army of his own standing. To say that his constitution is of iron, is to use a figure of speech not entirely appropriate; for while the latter will break, the former apparently will not. At Inkerman he had two horses shot under him, and in the Indian mutiny a sepoy's bullet shivered his sword out of his hands. Yet here he is sound in limb as ever, and only differing from the man of twenty years since by

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the amazing stock of experience which he has accumulated. He has completed his book for to-morrow, leaving, perhaps, a few vacant spaces for small bets at the last; and his book is a safe one enough, you may be sure.

There is no lack of studies of human nature to-night. There are men to whom the whole secret is familiar, and mere lads, to whom it all comes with the witching attractions of a brilliant novelty. If you look about you, you will discover that Captain Kennedy, who was reported to have received "such a tremendous facer twelve months since that he would have to quit the service forthwith," is in his native smoking-room once more. How he managed to pull over the crisis no one knows; but here he is to-night, fresh as ever, health as excellent, and resources, seemingly, as unimpaired. Then there are a whole troop of beardless young ensigns and cornets who have just got their commissions. The books which these young gentlemen have made are studies, and the principles upon which they are constructed are such as absolutely to defy the possibility of their winning, whatever the upshot of the race. And yet these are the boys who pride themselves on their consummate intimacy with the ways of the world, and who look to their Derby winnings to recoup themselves for their "hard hits" on the Guineas. Ingenuous but misguided youth! wait but till the day after to-morrow, and as sure as that morn comes, so surely will you find yourselves in, say, Messrs. Moss and Mofuz's parlour, in Maddox Street, face to face with those two monsters of

usury, who will take your bill at three months for 500*l.*, and let you have on its security possibly four. 'Tis a hard way to commence life thus heavily weighted; still, we suppose, experience, like other things to be prized, must be bought. Hard, too, it is for poor little Frank Plunger's mother. The boy was only gazetted a couple of months since. His commission was only bought for him by dint of much pinching at home; for 'twas the old story, and "he would be a soldier." But the lad was his mother's darling, and she would have plucked out her eye to have gratified his slightest whim. As it is, there is a hard struggle in the little cottage in Devonshire on the widow's part to make both ends meet: but she saves here, and stints herself there—robs herself of the little luxuries which the doctor has pronounced necessary for her, and so contrives to send her darling the money he wants; for Frank must live with gentlemen. Look at the lively young idiot now. Fie, boy! go home: fall down on thy knees: cover thy head: weep, pray, and amend.

There is one gentleman who, supposing him to be in England, never fails to attend the Raleigh on the eve of the Derby,—and there he stands yonder now. His professional weapon is that, not of the sword, but the pen. He has been everywhere; has seen everything, and done most; has founded a certain school of novelists, and preached the evangel of biceps and muscle long before Mr. Kingsley or Tom Hughes supplemented it with a

few Christian attributes. You might fancy he would be *blasé*, and that the scene around him would somewhat pall upon him : not a bit. As each London season comes, he seems to take a fresh lease of health, spirits, and strength. He has relinquished betting, however, and the *sponsio audax* of the younger men affects him not at all. He has ceased to be a giver or a taker of odds ; comes now to the club not to participate in the amusement, if amusement it is, but merely in the philosophic spirit of a looker-on. There is nothing new to him. He has seen it all many times before—knows the tone of the talk by heart ; has witnessed specimens innumerable of the same rashly precocious youngsters ; has seen the same keen faces of men of the Dudley Sewell, and Flimsy Sloper type, and knows, with the prophetic skill of a veritable Cassandra, what the upshot of the morrow will be. “Distress in the East-end !” he murmurs ; “bah, what will that be to distress in the West ?”

In St. James’s Street ; time 4.30 P.M. ; a murky dismal November afternoon ; three or four good hours yet to elapse before dinner ; and what to do with yourself during the interval you know not. Well met, friend. Wend your way in the direction whither we are going, entrust yourselves to our guidance, and we will engage to find an agreeable occupation for you till the period arrives when it is right you should return to your house, or retire to your chambers for the purpose of arranging yourself in the customary suit of solemn black, without which dinner

is a barbarism. Are you a billiard player? Well, you flatter yourself you can knock the balls about with some little effect; and when you were at your University it was currently whispered that you contrived to make quite a respectable little revenue at the pool played on Mr. Russell's subscription table. Such being the case then, we will take you in with us, if you please—in imagination there is no objection to your considering yourself a member for the next hour or so of the establishment which we are about to enter—to number 64, St. James's Street. A simple unpretentious house; a gun-shop below; but still a club above. And a club, too, which bears a name of historical celebrity, for the upper apartments of the residence in question form the *habitat* of the members of the Cocoa Tree Club—an institution wholly and entirely sacred to the pastime which is played upon the board of green cloth. The Cocoa Tree of to-day is solely a billiard club—and of its kind the best in London—rigidly exclusive, and agreeably select. You may see some very pretty play indeed at times upon this perfectly-kept table in the room which we have just entered with noiseless tread, for the Cocoa Tree boasts of possessing amongst its supporters perhaps some of the very best gentlemen players in England. Gentlemen players, mind you. No seedy half-pay captains here of the Flimsy Sloper or Flamley types, whose antecedents are doubtful, whose practices will not bear investigation, whose position is dubious, and who are as full of the dodges of the professional marker

as the apartment which they haunt is of the fumes of stale tobacco smoke. We don't stand this kind of thing here. We play the game, if you please, for the game's sake, and if we usually prefer to have a sovereign on it, what of that? The sovereign is fairly won and fairly lost. Mr. Christmas, most skilful of handicappers, knows our relative strength down to the minutest difference of a point, and adjusts the balance accordingly.

As we have said, it is about half-past four. "Let's to billiards," we exclaim with Cleopatra; and for this purpose we have arrived just at the nick of time. Three or four gentlemen are already assembled, and in a few minutes more we shall number between fifteen and twenty. The great game at the Cocoa Tree at this period of the day is a sweepstakes of about a dozen players, each of whom deposits a stake of five or ten shillings, and starts at love, or is mulct of points, according to the verdict of the above-mentioned well-versed marker. A highly interesting species of employment this, and one at which it is possible, if you are much of a player, to make quite enough money in an hour or so to cover the expenses of a very *recherché* little banquet at the Rag or at Arthur's subsequently. If you like to back your play, you will probably have opportunity for thus indulging your fancy, and altogether you may contrive to win or to lose a very respectable little sum in an agreeably brief space of time.

Spot the red. That is the first order. We number

perhaps twelve; total value of the stakes, three or four pounds. Whom have we playing? Ah, there are some well-known Cocoa Tree characters here to-day. That old gentleman who has just led off in so cautious a manner, and whose play you can see at once, is the embodiment of caution; he is a familiar standing dish on the establishment, none other than the Marquis of Kinvarra—a nobleman who would just as soon, when he is in town, think of passing a day without looking in at number 64, St. James's Street, before dinner, as he would of breakfasting elsewhere than at the table which he has occupied every morning for years past in the coffee-room at Brooks's. Yonder gentleman there, well-stricken too in years, yet hale and hearty, and with a peculiar twinkle in his eye, which at once tells you he means business, is Mr. Podosokus—an old-fashioned player like his lordship, but a marvellously steady one, and universally admitted to be one of the best judges of the game, and the most judicious giver or taker of odds on any conceivable stroke extant. Here we have Mr. Harold Price, a dashing player, better at a winning game than a losing, one of the dearest pool shots in the club, and one of the best steeplechase riders in England. That gentleman yonder, who disdains to remove his hat or to doff his frock coat, and who chinks his cue with an air of infinite languor and *ennui*, is Captain Pockett, of the 19th Lancers, quite the best player in the regiment, and in his own opinion in London; and that gentleman who now proceeds to play is a comparatively recent importa-

tion from Oxford, with a perfect knowledge of the game, Mr. Runacue. Till Mr. Runacue made his appearance on the scene, Captain Pockett enjoyed an almost undisputed pre-eminence at the Cocoa Tree. The consequence is that there exists a tolerably keen rivalry, friendly though it is, between these gentlemen. Captain Pockett is famous for his losing hazards and cannons ; Mr. Runacue's strong points are the spot-stroke and his perfect knowledge of force. Then there is Mr. Flimper, an extremely neat little gentleman, and a very pretty player. Mr. Flimper is to a certain extent a mystery ; one of those social sphinxes whom it is so common to meet in clubs, who knows everybody, does everything, is seen everywhere, and yet is said not to have a rap. Mr. Flimper is only a clerk in a Government office—a good office it is true ; but with a salary of at most three hundred a-year. Private income he is known to possess none, yet the little gentleman enjoys himself as if financial considerations never entered into his head ; is always perfectly dressed, and never at a loss for ready money. “ How the deuce does Flimper manage it ? ” Such is the general query of society, and such ours. Then we have the Hon. Percy Fluker, who has spent years, to say nothing of sovereigns innumerable, in endeavouring to acquire a practical knowledge of the game, and is still as far removed from the attainment of his object as ever. A great card is the Hon. Percy on certain evenings at the Cocoa Tree—always ready to play anyone, to back his opinion to any

extent, and when that opinion proves, as it usually does prove, wholly devoid of basis to pay the sum whose loss he has incurred with the best and most good-natured air imaginable. As for the remainder of the gentlemen taking part in the present sweepstakes, we need not mention them specially. Officers from Aldershot, *attachés* from F. O. ; we have them both—*et hoc genus omne*—they are club men all.

But meanwhile the game is far advanced. Mr. Runacue happened at the commencement to shoot ahead ; and ahead till now he has kept. The fifties are fairly reached, the game is 64, when, lo and behold, Mr. Runacue awakes to the fact that he is gradually getting collared. Mr. Runacue, 54 ; the Marquis of Kinvarra, 51 ; Mr. Podasokus, 49. That is the state of the poll so far as the first three players are concerned. It is Mr. Runacue's turn to play ; he tries his favourite spot-stroke and misses. Then comes the Marquis ; two steady old-fashioned cannons bring his score up to 55 ; two more losing hazards, one off the red, and his lordship is advanced to 60 ; then a fluke—62. Mr. Podasokus plays and does nothing, for he has had to play from balk. Affairs are getting serious. Mr. Runacue sees an opportunity, manages to get into the middle pocket off the red, and, by dint of consummate delicacy of touch, brings the red ball back from the top cushion, exactly within playing distance of the left-hand middle pocket. Mr. Runacue, 63 ; the Marquis of Kinvarra, 62 ; and Mr. Runacue's play, and

the spot-stroke on. 'Tis Lombard Street to a China orange on the Oxford champion. At this moment, just as our friend is preparing to win in a canter, some one who is standing at the table immediately opposite emits from his mouth a long sinuous trail of cigar smoke. Mr. Runacue is not a tobacco consumer himself, and the fumes of the weed annoy him, and impede the accuracy of his vision above everything. Had it come a moment earlier or a moment later it would not have mattered, as it is it reaches him just at the wrong moment—just as he is in the very act of making his stroke. Untoward occurrence! Mr. Runacue misses; 'tis the turn of the Marquis again. There is an easy and an obvious cannon. His lordship makes it. Game is called, and the præprandial sweepstakes at the Cocoa Tree is over.

But it is not by any means to be supposed that the Cocoa Tree is only resorted to at these hours. Between 8 and 10.30 or 11 P.M. it is indeed nearly deserted; but as midnight approaches it commences rapidly to refill. Then is the time when the serious playing of the Cocoa Tree is to be witnessed. What we have seen before dinner was merely a kind of light preparatory exercitation or gentle preliminary canter. When men mean business, and the stakes are something more than purely formal attempts to introduce something of excitement into the occupation, then is the time when Capt. Pockett will seriously pit himself against Runacue, and 500 up is played off as a crucial test, when bets of very considerable

amount are made, when Mr. Podasokus eagerly watches an eligible opportunity for the investment of a five-pound note, and the Hon. Percy Fluker is game to speculate in hundreds; when the cool *cognoscenti* gather round the table, and collect a whole fund of observations highly useful for future occasions; when Mr. Runacue's imperturbable coolness has placed many a hundred in the purses of his partizans, to say nothing of his own; and when Capt. Pockett's disparagement of his adversary has cost him dear enough before now. Then too is the time, when, as the small hours of the morning approach, a rich odour of supper pervades the apartments upstairs; when the intelligent Christmas, already mentioned, is heard to remark that devilled kidneys, broiled bones, and lobster mayonnaise are in readiness for such gentlemen as fancy these piquant refreshments and waiting only to be consumed; when Mr. Runacue, whose partiality for these pleasantly late meals is proverbial, discovers that he is half famished; when Capt. Pockett—there is nothing like billiards for giving you an appetite—finds that he is in a similar predicament; when Mr. Harold Price adjourns with the pair—as for himself supper is a meal in which he never indulges, for he fancies it interferes with his nerves—to wonder at their feats of consumption over the nocturnal table, not less admirable in their way than those which they have cleverly performed with the cue; when—billiards is pre-eminently a thirst-inspiring game—large orders for curious cups are given, and the frequent

pop of champagne corks plays pleasing melodies in A sharp.

One more look and the curtain must fall on the glimpses which we have here afforded the reader into the land of London club life. "Westward the course of empire takes its way," and we move our footsteps, if you please, in a precisely similar direction. Down Bond Street we go into Oxford Street, till we stop at the front door of the Portland Club in Stratford Place. The Portland, as most readers will probably be aware, is one of the few club strongholds of whist existing in the metropolis. Indeed, with the exception of the Arlington, an establishment invested possibly with a higher degree of social dignity, the Portland is perhaps the only whist club *pur et simple* existing in London. We are going to dine there to-day at the members' regular *table d'hôte*, whose hour is fixed for eight o'clock. After that we shall have an opportunity of watching the course which the regular business of the evening takes, and the method upon which it is conducted.

Vehementissime in eo errare mihi videntur homines, &c., which fragment of classical literature we may freely paraphrase, of all the absurd mistakes which fiction-mongers make, there is none more absurd than that which they one and all perpetrate when they endeavour to describe to their readers the scene, with its surroundings, of fashionable gambling. Who has not read the monstrously miscoloured narratives of what goes on on such occasions as

these? Who has not lifted up his eyes in wonderment when he has been told of all their accompanying phenomena—of the flushed faces and bloodshot eyes then to be seen, of the looks of wild excitement, of the clenched teeth, the hollow cheek, the trembling hand, the frequent imprecations, the rumpled collar, the neckcloth all awry, the desperate losses, and the mad excesses to obliterate their memory? We wonder whether any moderately well-informed and ordinary intelligent reader has ever for a moment suffered himself deliberately to believe that such are the studies to be contemplated in haunts consecrated to the pursuits of scientific speculation, such as the Arlington or Portland? As the abysses of human credulity are unfathomable, it is unfortunately out of the question to decide. One of the objects which we have had throughout in these chapters has been to correct the vulgar view on matters connected with club life generally, to show that the joint-stock palaces of St. James's and Pall Mall, so far from being the seats of any profoundly inscrutable mystery, are in reality nothing more than voluntary associations of gentlemen, conducted upon extremely reasonable and intelligible principles of luxury and comfort. We have endeavoured to show the shallow absurdity of the phrase, which the London correspondents of provincial journals are so ridiculously fond of using, "the talk of the clubs." In the same spirit, we may here introduce a brief episode which will satisfactorily explode the popular ideas on the subject of the interiors of these

establishments occasionally called, in virtue of a traditional misnomer, "Hells."

We have done our dinner at the Portland. Our claret has been discussed, the smoking-room has been rendered aromatic with the mingled odour of our cubas and our coffee, and murmurous with the muffled sounds of our conversation. Already a movement has been made, and an adjournment decided on in favour of whist. Several of our number have descended below. We too will follow, if you please, and on the *suave mari magno* principle contemplate, though we do not participate in, the game. Perhaps you expect to observe some of those phenomena, credulous reader, to which we have adverted above? In that case you will be decidedly mistaken. The whole apartment in which we are betrays not a single trace of abnormal excitement on the part of its occupants. Stay there as long as you like, till the points grow higher and the night advances so far that the morning is at hand, and it will be the same. But the emotion is only suppressed, you say: it is felt just the same. Possibly; but herein lies the whole point for which we are contending. Impassivity, so far as externals go, is a stereotyped article in the creed of modern manners; and if you were in the company of a crowd of philosophers, silently debating in their minds on the reality of the objective world, it is impossible that the tranquillity could be more perfect. There they sit at their tables in parties of four. Look at the immobility of the countenance

of each. Not a symptom of agitation, scarcely a muscle moved, though the turn which the luck has taken may mean a loss of hundreds or thousands to one at least of the set. Occasionally some loungeur strolls up and down; nods to this acquaintance, smiles at that; looks at some one's hand, makes a bet upon that of another; and so passes on. And the players themselves? Well, whether they lose or win, it is all done with an air of business. And upon the most placid principles of business everything in the apartment is ordered. As one member of a set after another gets wearied with the play, he leaves the room: nothing is said of gains or losses. But as he passes out, he silently hands to a clerk seated at a desk in a little space fenced off by rails, a memorandum of the evening's work—to whom he is indebted, and who is indebted to him. The discreet official makes a note of the matter in the quietest manner imaginable. The liability will have to be discharged to-morrow—nay that very afternoon, or exposure will be the result; but it is only early morning now, and there is time enough for that.

Yet miraculously serene as the surface is, there is an element of tragedy which occasionally wells up. You might have been at this club on just such another night as this, about three years since, when commercial matters in the city had reached their climacteric of catastrophe, and capitalists hitherto thought solvent were ruined daily. You might have sat side-by-side at dinner with a leading partner in a well-known London banking firm. His

air was occasionally a little *distrain* ; but he talked vivaciously enough, and seemed quite master of the situation. He went to the whist-room afterwards, played long, and lost heavily. Yet he bade good-night to his friends in the jauntiest manner conceivable, and before he left the club handed in the statement of his account to the book-keeper with absolutely stoical calmness ; then hailed a hansom, and told the driver to take him home to his suburban villa. You might have happened to glance in the afternoon and evening papers ; if so, there was one announcement which can scarcely have failed to arrest your eye, "Terrible Suicide of a City Banker." At six o'clock that morning your friend, who left you with a smile and a jest, had blown his brains out in his garden at, say, Campden Hill. Such things are not of frequent occurrence very likely ; but still for all that such things were and are.

CHAPTER XVII.

SOME CLUB TYPES.

Significance and purport of the title of this Chapter — Different types of Club fogeys — Mr. Raker — Club juveniles — Mr. Arthur Flippit and his friend — Gradual disappearance of the Slang Sporting Club Youth — Club cads — General features of the class — Huggins at the Polyolbion — Muggins — Mr. Percy Brandling — The Newspaper gormandizer; Mr. Chuff — The Theatrical Mania; Mr. Warwick Smith.

HITHERTO our observation of club characters has been confined exclusively to such special and exceptional developments as, in a consideration of the various particular institutions which we have passed severally before us in review, seemed, in proportion to their individual prominence in the social life of the establishment to which they belong, to merit an unusual measure of attention on the part of the casual visitor. To club men, as a whole, viewed not as members of this or that society, but as a race with a separate and distinct existence of their own, we have as yet directed no especial notice. We have been occupied with the contemplation of types of diverse nationalities, rather than with the study of characters which belong to all club nationalities alike. We must now rise from the particular to the universal, and discard-

ing by a process of abstraction all points of accidental dissimilarity, take a ground common to clubs in general, and glance, cursorily though it may be, at those natural products which are to be found indiscriminately and equally in pretty well all the joint-stock palaces which grace St. James's and Pall Mall. Club fogeys, club cads, club bores, club sphinxes, *et hoc genus omne*—of these the Carlton can claim no monopoly over the Reform; the Rag over the Conservative, or the Senior United Service over the Junior. Having so far as lies within our power differentiated the most prominent clubs in London, by assigning to them each separately certain features peculiarly their own, we are compelled to take in hand a broader if a briefer theme, one which is more catholic in idea though less exacting in the matter of space, and duly place before the reader some few of those various standing dishes and stock types whose recognition is easy and immediate, some if not all of which are owned by every club in the metropolis.

We will in the first instance, proceed, if you please, according to the principle of seniority. Place for the club fogley! Difficult as it may be to say anything that has not been said before on this well-worn theme, these venerable and highly artificial specimens of humanity, with their stereotyped smile and "false teeth's false gleam," it is necessary that a few words should be devoted to a class which is numerically so extensive, and which occupies so considerable an amount of space

in the multitudinous bay-windows of our metropolitan club land. The exteriors which these gentlemen present are by no means of a uniform order. The well-kept florid old dandy is but one specimen of the class. Rubicundity of countenance, spacious amplitude of shirt, protuberance of frill, and circumference of girth, which is an eloquent testimony to the skill of the club *chef*, are not the only distinguishing marks of the club fogey. Even of the dandy there are several descriptions. If Major Monsoon answers to that which we have just given, Major Swellington Spare, whose personal appearance is the first care of his existence, most certainly does not; for Major S. S. is a thin lean man, with a sharp nose and an ungenial manner. Then again there is another type of club fogey to be met with everywhere, and entirely different from either of the foregoing: gentlemen these of gloomy appearance, heavy brow, and copper-coloured countenance, with hair—their own—plastered down their head; whose clothes hang on them loosely and shapelessly, and whose air is altogether *distrain*. Upon examination and interrogation you will generally discover that fogey of this order are Anglo-Indians; that the assimilation of the hue of their complexion to the gold which it is to be hoped they have managed to amass in the course of their protracted residence beneath a tropical sky, arises from the partial loss of that very necessary organ, the liver. Yet they are active for their years—nay, even restless—enjoy life,

and above everything revel in scandal. These are the men whose mornings are occupied in expeditions into the city, and who turn up at their respective clubs, ready for lunch at two or three; who spend their afternoons brokenly in wandering from one apartment to another, now dipping into the 'Bullionist' or the 'Friend of India,' by way of refreshing their acquaintance with their country's literature, and now seating themselves with an air of sombre dissatisfaction in the easiest of easy chairs wheeled close up to the window. At seven they will moodily retire to their homes in Gloucester Place or in Bayswater, and so their day is brought to a close.

Club seniors of the fogey class are animated by different feelings towards the younger men who, as years pass by, make their way into the establishment. They may treat them with studied and supercilious contempt, ignoring their presence whenever they can, and whenever they cannot, adopting a system of wholesale and severe snubs,—at best, plainly letting them see that their existence is a fact which it requires no small effort to tolerate; or they may take up a wholly different line of action, seeking their society, eager to mix with their talk, and disclaiming anything like social inequality arising from discrepancy of age. The patriarchs, inclined to these tactics of action, are readily discernible. You may know them from the conspicuous juvenility of their costume, from their jauntiness of air, from the manner in which they hang about the smoking-room when midnight

is near, and the regularity with which they attend the billiard-room while the ante-prandial pool is going on. To this order exactly does Mr. Raker belong. Not know him? Why there is scarcely a club in London which has not its Raker or two. Never mind what your club is, lounge up into the smoking-room just before the advent of the small hours, and old Raker is sure to be there. You will find him close to a knot of rather rapid-going men, whose conversation may be racy but is not select, and who have just come in from the different theatres and operas full of theatrical scandal of every description, and flowing over with little innuendoes affecting more or less the character of most actresses in London. Very highly coloured, indeed, are the anecdotes which these young gentlemen detail, and not a little warm some of the gossip which they circulate. Just notice how old Raker strains his ears not to lose a word of what is said: just see how, when the culminating point in the interest of the narrative is about to be reached, the shameless old satyr draws his chair closer and closer up to that of the speaker, that he may not miss a single lascivious particular. We wonder whether Mr. Raker knows the way in which these same young men, who now titillate his ears with these choice episodes, speak of him behind his back—if he could realize the impression which his graceless old age makes upon them—and the contempt which his hoary hairs, that are not honourable, excite. If he and others like him could but be informed on all these points, we

do not think that they would commit acts of such flagrant self-insult as those which they are practising now. There is no fool like an old fool: and the vices of superannuation are the worst vices of all.

The immense increase lately in the number of London clubs has had one very natural consequence—it has brought club life within the reach of those who are anxious to enjoy its advantages at a much earlier age than was formerly possible. While the number of clubs was limited, admission into one of them could only be procured after a considerable period of waiting. Even now, it is true, there is plenty of scope for the exercise of patience before the best of these establishments can be entered: for, by the inversion of an economical law, the demand for clubs seems to be in exact proportion to the supply. Meanwhile, the existing multiplication of these institutions has brought about one very patent result—the presence of a strong contingent of exceedingly young club men, mere lads who, judging from their appearance, have barely left school, or ought not to have done with college. A fearful and wonderful precocity is one of the principal features of the times. Our very school-boys are *blasé* now-a-days, and lads of seventeen know more of the world than the young man of twenty-five, just returned from the grand tour, did a quarter of a century since. Humanity lapses into senility before it has enjoyed the advantages of youth: there is no intervening period and debateable ground recognized as

existing between the age of the boy and the man. The jacket is scarcely cast aside before the *toga virilis* is donned: and we no sooner emerge out of the obscurity of the nursery than we are blinded with the full glare of the youthful hero who appears before us as a perfect specimen of humanity.

But the precocity of the young club Amphitryon is greater still. To notice the air with which young gentlemen of this type sit down to their dinner in the coffee-room, or lounge in their chairs at the club-window, subjecting all the passers-by to a running fire of criticism and comment, is to witness so many different works of art. What a professed knowledge of dishes! What a sublime insight as to the exact flavour which an *entrée* should possess! What a glib acquaintance with rare wines! What an air of utter inability to "dine," save with at least half-a-dozen courses and a dessert! And then see them lounging by the window that commands the view of Pall Mall and St. James's; listen to them; hear the stories which they have to tell you, the scandal, the gossip, the suggestive suspicions, and the rest, touching well-nigh each particular occupant of each particular carriage that sweeps past *en route* to Piccadilly or the Park. Young Trippit there—as he stands toothpick in mouth, one hand daintily toying with certain symptoms of incipient down which his upper lip betrays, and the other thrust into the capacious recesses of the pocket of a certain portion of his clothing "nameless here for ever-

more." Watch him for a moment or two. The lad does not look more than nineteen, and is certainly not two-and-twenty. Yet he is a man about town in his own estimation, and well-nigh the gayest young rake in London. He has just been lunching with a few more of his set, and they are now on the point of setting off for a stroll in the Park. Young Trippit is merely a clerk in the Tintax Office, with a salary of 120*l.* a-year; his father is a rector of a country parish in Lincolnshire, who finds it hard enough to scrape together funds sufficient to supply his young ravens with bread and butter. Arthur—Arty is the abbreviation by which he is always known—contrived to get a nomination to the Tintax Office through the agency of his relative the Earl of Dumbfoodle, and as a young fellow of pleasing manners and heterogeneous tastes, he soon found, by dint of the pretty numerous introductions that he had, a tolerably copious crop of associates, acquaintances, and friends. He has now been nearly three years in London, and has acquired a tolerably extensive stock of experience. Once or twice has the boy been in a financial mess; but at the last moment either enough money has been got together at what he calls the "home department" to extricate him from his little difficulty, or his titled and noble relative Lord Dumbfoodle has come down with a handsome tip. There is nothing particular to say against little Arty Trippit. He is conceited, empty, and selfish: but he is really very juvenile, and it has been his misfortune to be

thrown amongst a certain lot of young fellows to whom it would have been far better for him to have remained an entire stranger.

If, as we said, it is amusing to hear these youngsters criticize the various articles of their dinner and pass judgment on the value of the different vintages which they sip, it is even more amusing to notice the veritable omniscience which they possess on the subject of the life, the persons, and the doings of aristocratic London. They could tell you, if they chose, how and why it is that Lady Blanche never speaks to Frank Courtenay now ; what occurred at Lady Mildmay's garden-party at Roehampton ; of the curious doings of Miss Dash at Baden last summer ; whose ponies those are which pretty Miss Phaethon drives ; and why it is that Charley Martyn is never now seen about with the Brabazon girls. If, in fine, you want to know the secret of any marriage which has lately surprised the world, go to Mr. Arthur Flippit and his friends. If you wish to sound the lowest depth of social scandal, sit with them for half-an-hour in the club smoking-room. If you wish to see the kings, queens, and princesses of metropolitan civilization subjected to a remorselessly cynical analysis, to know what is their precise position in the present, their antecedents, and their prospects, accompany one or two of these *prodigues* in their stroll through the Park, and you will learn more in the space of half-an-hour than you could have heard in any other quarter in the space of a week.

If the descriptions which Thackeray gave us of young club men are still in many of their features applicable and true, there are one or two points in which modifications are necessary, or on which reservations must be made. The pretension and the affectation, the ignorance of the world underlying the assumption of preternatural acumen and sagacity—these indeed exist now just as much as they ever did. But the type of youth, so common once, sketched by the author of the ‘*Book of Snobs*’ with such inimitable skill, who makes it his business to impart into the society of his club, or indeed of any miscellaneous assemblage of supposed gentlemen, the airs of the stable and the betting-shop, has, if not wholly at least for the greater part, vanished. It is true that the taste and passion, of which this demeanour was but the outward and visible sign, exist still with greater force than they perhaps ever existed. The change consists in the fact that society generally has agreed to regard the slanginess of bearing and the noisiness of costume which marked their existence as an error against good breeding. Now and again, perhaps, a fitful breeze may sweep across the changeful sea of fashion, and trousers of a veritably groomy tightness in fit become the order of the day; but, as a general rule, the costume which was so studiously imitative of that worn by ostlers, and the loud talk which reeked with the aroma of the stable, and was so plentifully garnished with the lowest phrases of the betting-ring, has gone out. By our young club men, who

plunge most dangerously and whose tastes are most equine, it has ceased to be thought the correct thing to forsake one's seat at a decent dinner-table merely to have the honour of consuming an under-done beef-steak with Jack Sniggs the jockey, or of drinking gin-and-water and smoking long clays with Bob Patsy the prize-fighter. Our lads may possibly be more pretentious than they once were; morally their tastes now may be much what they were half-a-century ago; superficially, however, they are infinitely less low. To use slang is a very different thing from being slangy. The youthful clubbists of the present day merit the former description rather than the latter. Of intellectual taste there may be few indications enough to be found among the *jeunesse dorée* of our time. It is something to say that there is less of ostentatious vulgarity of demeanour than there once was, and that little customs and modes of speech which were considered meritorious achievements less than twenty years since would be voted unanimously bad form now. All this is simply due to the tendency which has gained so much ground lately—and toward the prosy strain of which clubs have perhaps contributed not a little—to regard prominent peculiarities of manner as deviations from the right path. Better have no such thing as individuality at all than the individuality of the vulgarian.

We find ourselves naturally and insensibly impelled to the consideration of a class of club men to whose existence we have already, though but incidentally,

alluded in these volumes. However much we may wish to do so, it is impossible for us, as faithful chroniclers of actual types, to ignore the fact of the club cad.

At some time or other it has probably been the luck of most people, in the course of their weary peregrinations, satirically styled pleasure-trips, to have been compelled to seek a few days' rest and refuge in a tourists' hotel. Any one within the circle of whose experience the calamity has occurred, can scarcely fail to have noticed the barbarous manner in which the low-born and ill-bred Briton, "out for his holiday," seeks to augment the labours of the wretched waiter, who, as it is, is fairly worked off his legs, by ceaselessly calling for him, peremptorily ordering him to fetch this or that, though it may be not an arm's length from where he is seated himself, and finally, if the miserable creature delays but for a moment in the execution of his commands, flooding his devoted ears with a stream of ill-chosen abuse. The truth is that these tyrants, with a foreknowledge of the fact that they will have to pay their money when the bill is sent up, are determined to have their money's worth. Comparatively unaccustomed to the luxury of attendance at home, Chuffin, who bolts his breakfast as he best can in the little back-parlour before he rushes into his shop, or Snooks, who is habitually compelled to look to the boiling of potatoes for dinner himself, while Mrs. Snooks dishes up the mutton, and Sarah runs out to fetch the ale, feel when they are "out for their holiday" they have a right to domineer over

the menials of the establishment. The tourist cad is the analogue of at least one species of club cads.

How Huggins managed to get into the Polyolbion no one knows ; for at the Polyolbion they are apt to be somewhat exclusive, and there is no doubt about it that Huggins is a club cad of the very first order. Huggins usually lunches at the Polyolbion every day. He is not in the habit of dining there save on grand occasions, when he has a friend or two whom he is desirous of treating to the luxuries of the club *ménage*. For lunch, the fare which Huggins orders is simple enough—a chop possibly. This *communis locus* of English cookery is duly brought him, with the various condiments and accessories which thoughtful waiters place in immediate juxtaposition. Under these circumstances most persons would be content to commence their frugal meal, with a thankful spirit and a silent tongue. Not so Huggins. Look at him. See how he first turns the chop from one side of his plate to the other, then thrusts his fork into this portion of it, and then into that, elevates it till it almost touches the extremity of his nose, cuts off a fragment, lifts it up to his mouth, places it again on his plate, and finally roars out “Waiter.” The waiter, who has been standing by the while, perfectly prescient of the inevitable *dénouement*, runs up to Huggins’ table, and Huggins breaks out into a storm of abuse. The chop is not cooked ; the meat is bad ; it has not been hung long enough ; it is unfit for a gentleman. Huggins will speak to the secretary, will

write to the committee, will leave the club. The waiter is of course apologetic—oh ye race of hardly-used men, how much have ye not to put up with at the hands of the Hugginses of club life, the crusty old country gentlemen who if they cannot get exactly the dinner which they declare they have been accustomed to eat “at this club for the last twenty years, sir: I was an original member, by Jove!” grow purple in paroxysms of passion, and from the vulgar young tipplers who over their wine are bullying and familiar by turns—very sorry, but will take care that it does not occur again. What the “it” is the waiter has not the slightest idea, for the chop, it is needless to say, is excellent.

But because Huggins is a specimen of the club cad, at once abusive and stingy,—a man who pays as little as he can and never pays that little without the exercise of an Englishman’s prescriptive privilege, and “taking out” in grumbling the full worth of the money whose value he has been unable to realize in any other manner—it does not follow that meanness is at all of the essence of this unpleasant class, against whose irruption into clubs it seems impossible to frame any adequate prohibitory measures. There are errors on the side of excess just as there are on the side of defect. There are club cads whose vice is ostentation, just as there are club cads whose sin is parsimony; there are Mugginses as well as Hugginses. For Muggins, cad though he is to the core, and vulgar as he is to the backbone, errs in a manner wholly different from Huggins, and makes it his business “to show those

fellows at the Sarcophagus," to use his own choice language, "what money can do, and what a good dinner really is." Enter the coffee-room about five any afternoon, and the chances are that you will find Muggins with his greedy eyes and fat bloated face pouring over the frame which contains the bill of fare, and confidentially asking Tippins, the head-waiter—cads of the Muggins type always make it a business to be on terms of strict confidence and even intimacy with the club menials—what he thinks are the best dishes going to-day. "Never mind the price," says Muggins, when some less pecunious and more refined member enters for a purpose similar to that in which Muggins is already engaged; "I don't care what I pay: a man must dine." So this club cad sits down in solitary state to his dinner, and gives vociferous orders, audible from one end of the room to the other, for rare wines, or for anything else which seems to offer him an opportunity for spending his money in a noticeable way. Fortunately for Muggins he is about as sensitive as the hide of a rhinoceros, otherwise he would scarcely fail to notice and to be hurt, or instructed, at the very cold salutation which his acquaintances as they pass by his table give him in return for his boisterous hail-fellow-well-met greeting. As it is, Muggins is encased, eyes and all, in a dense covering of satisfaction with himself and with Providence who has brought within his reach the means which enable him to eat and drink far more than is at all good for him, and to proclaim in accents un-

mistakable to the whole world that he does so. But as we are not writing a treatise on club cads generally, we may leave Muggins peacefully to his dinner, and pass on to other developments of club character.

For the mass of mankind it is quite enough to be elected members of a well-appointed and comfortably-managed club. Here their ambition ends. So long as they are allowed to go their own way, and have no reason to complain of any shortcomings of the committee, inactivity on the part of the waiters, or negligence on that of the *chef*, they are content. They have no wish to interfere with the composition of the governing body, or to have an active voice in the general administration themselves. They infallibly prefer to take the goods which the gods send them without perpetually being called to examine accounts and consider measures. Their idea of club liberty, just as the Englishman's idea of civil liberty generally, is a passive and not an active conception. But exceptional as such instances may be, instances there still are in which this order of things is reversed, and two or three such are certain to be comprised in every club of any considerable size. These are the men who have a natural thirst for power and an innate itching after notoriety—the victims of that inveterate restlessness of moral and mental temperament which may be mistaken for ambition, but which is in reality a pygmy vanity and a morbid self-consciousness. To this order of club men does our friend Percy Brandling belong. This young

gentleman, though his avowed profession is the civil service, on the strength of an occasional contribution to some of the magazines of the day affects to consider literature his *métier*, and likes to be thought of and spoken of as a kind of public character. He has latterly taken up the notion very strongly that anything which at all tends to bring him before the world—from the construction of flimsy essays for perishable periodicals down to the acting in amateur theatricals for the funds of a hospital or the building of a school-room—is a step in the right direction. If he could see his name in print in no other way he would probably deem an appearance in the columns of the ‘Gazette’ preferable to total silence and obscurity. About a year ago he was inspired with the idea that it would be a valuable assistance to him in the achievement of a reputation, if he could contrive to get connected in some way or other with the managing committee of his club. To secure this end he intrigued in every direction, and gave himself a perfect infinity of trouble. He wrote letters to the secretary containing suggestions which he hoped that gentleman would bring before the governing body, and whenever he met any member of this corporation with whom he was on speaking terms, Mr. Brandling lost no opportunity of button-holing him, and volunteering him a variety of hints as to matters which might be reformed with great advantage to the club in general. In fact, so indefatigable was Mr. Brandling that at last, when the time for the re-election of committee-men

arrived, it was universally agreed that this gentleman should be invited to undertake one of the onerous posts then vacant, and from the vantage-ground of authority try his hand on some of those experiments which he was so fond of eternally recommending. Mr. Brandling at once recognized the chance of increasing his publicity, and readily consented. Since this gentleman's induction into office the Megatherium has, however, gone on much as before; and our friend Percy has received such a succession of effective snubs from his colleagues in power that he will be by no means sorry when his official twelve months have expired, and he lapses once more into the condition of a private member.

There is a reasonable hope, as we have said elsewhere in this treatise, that the club bore will in process of time become altogether extinct. As we have already incidentally described the nature of this gentleman, we need not further revert to the type here. There is, however, a certain club character bearing some little affinity to the bore, whom we may just notice—we mean what, for lack of a better title, we may call the newspaper gormandizer. The most aggravating specimen of this type with which we are acquainted is little Mr. Chuff. Mr. Chuff is a short gentleman with a large head, and a slight curvature in the regions of his back, superinduced, there are some who say at the club, by the manner in which he delights perpetually to pore over all the daily and weekly prints that he can find. Walk into the morning-room of Mr.

Chuff's club, the Posts, and there you will see this insatiable reader of ephemeral journals comfortably ensconced in an easy chair, ankle-deep in newspapers. 'Times,' 'Standard,' 'Telegraph,' and all the rest, are strewn close at his side, or packed away between his legs and on his lap. We will suppose it is Friday afternoon. You have a few moments to spare, and wander into the morning-room of the Posts, anxious to see one or two of the new numbers of those weekly periodicals which antedate the advertised day of their appearance by some fifteen or sixteen hours. Do you wish to glance through the 'Athenæum?' Mr. Chuff is resting his right elbow on it. The 'Illustrated London News?' Mr. Chuff is just taking it up with his left hand. 'Public Opinion?' That is what Mr. Chuff is at this moment engaged in reading. If you ask him for any of these, the little man will vow that he was just going to look through that particular number. If you think that you will wait till he has done with it, you may be sure that he will tire you out; for Mr. Chuff's eyes wear an exceedingly malicious look through his spectacles, and there is nothing which gives him greater pleasure than to defraud the expectant and would-be reader of the last copy of any of the above-mentioned journals of the opportunity of perusal.

Mr. Warwick Smith may be taken as a fair illustration of a particular class of club men whose existence is a comparative novelty, but whose numbers have recently been very considerably reinforced. What Warwick

Smith's occupation or profession is, no one knows. He is not a man of fortune—that is a certain fact; yet he always seems to have a very respectable amount of capital at his disposal. He is not a card-player, he seldom handles a cue, and he was never seen on a racecourse in his life. Yet Warwick Smith is always pre-occupied in his manner, habitually seeing persons who call on him for business purposes at the club, and full to overflowing of engagements. Does Mr. Smith go into the City? No. He is not even a director or a shareholder in a discount company, and he has not invested a single sixpence in any of those overgrown hotels which are springing up all over the country with the rapidity of mushrooms. On purely commercial or political questions Mr. Warwick has but little to say at best, and nothing that will give you the smallest measure of instruction. But once ask Mr. Smith what he thinks about the condition of the London theatres, or about the prospect of a new one paying, and he will wax eloquent. The man is, indeed, brimful of his subject. The age is one of speculation, financial not less than philosophical. There is the speculation of the Turf and there is the speculation of the Stock Exchange: the Trinity is completed by the addition of the speculation which may be described as theatrical,—a passion quite as tangible and real, and not very much less widely developed than either of the foregoing. There never was a time when it was possible to notice the victims of the *furore* scattered in such lavish profusion as

they now are throughout the clubs. It is here that they meet together, gather in knots, criticize schemes, and discuss projects for the carrying out of what are the only ideas of their existence. These persons are not mere lads, as might be supposed, bitten in the first enthusiastic heyday of their youth with a stage frenzy, dazzled by the tinsel splendour of life behind the scenes, and fairly carried off their heads by the cærulean effulgence of lime-light. They are men mature in years, and not inexperienced in the world,—men for the most part who have contrived to squander a considerable fortune, sometimes fortunes, and who, casting about for some manner in which they can replenish their empty coffers, finally decide upon trying a theatrical venture. Of capital they generally have, in some mysterious and unaccountable way, a certain degree of command. If they have not money themselves, there is generally some one behind them ready to back their game and to lay down the stakes. Then they usually have some interest in reversions of property, or there are chances that phantom mines in Yorkshire may some day or other disclose a vein of Golconda opulence. Of course these gentlemen themselves are not heard of by the public at large as primarily interested in any of these new histrionic speculations which now develop themselves almost every day. They persistently wear a mask; but they are at the bottom of the concern for all that. They lounge about the theatres in which they are interested, after dinner at their clubs;

inspect with anxiety the nature of the house ; besiege the ears of the managerial dummy with hints and suggestions ; overhaul the books, and scrutinize the accounts.

Of this class of men Mr. Warwick Smith, a gentleman middle-aged in point of years, may be accepted as a fair specimen. He has always some great theatrical idea floating before him—always some grand scheme which is to make his own fortune and his friends' too, if they will but listen to his advice, *in esse* or *in posse*. If you enter the club he will walk up to you, say he has a few words for you in private, and forthwith commence to tell you how he has hit upon a notion, completely novel in every respect, which requires but a few hundreds to start it, and which will infallibly prove a royal road to the wealth of the Rothschilds. Stroll with Mr. Warwick Smith down the Strand or any of the main thoroughfares at all contiguous thereto, and he will point out to you some spacious building which is to be let, or shortly will be, and which with a very slight amount of change might be developed into the most admirable theatre in the world. In his way Mr. W. Smith is a very busy man indeed. He has always an appointment with some capitalist to keep, some actor to see, or, more frequently still, some actress to talk with, whom he is anxious to instal as sole manageress of the new Bedford Theatre. With ladies and gentlemen of this class Warwick Smith is a great favourite. The necessary arrangements for the carrying out of any of these theatrical enterprises naturally involve

a considerable number of friendly meetings, and during the summer months it is discovered that there can be no circumstances more satisfactory for the conduct of these than those associated with Greenwich or Richmond, to say nothing of the pleasing little accompaniment of dinner thereat. If our friend Warwick and the members of the class to which he belongs generally were to exercise one tithe of the energy and industry which they display in pursuit of this theatrical chimera upon some definite and attainable object, they might and probably would manage to amass a very respectable fortune. But it is the precarious nature of their ambition which constitutes its charm. It is the magic radiance of the foot-lights which causes everything that glitters to seem like gold.

But the race of club men with all its myriad variations is an inexhaustible theme. We must be content with giving here certain of the more characteristic types, and, as it seems to us, the most recent developments. Time would fail us to delineate on a more comprehensive scale the features which we have glanced at now, or even fully to complete the social miniatures which we have essayed to paint. We must pass over a whole crowd of ancient bucks and young dandies, or, to adopt the approved parlance of the day, "swells." We must not attempt more than the mere mention of little Frank Tapper and young gentlemen of that ilk, with their parade of social engagements, their fashionable swagger, their laborious imitation of what they admire but cannot attain to—the affectation

that causes them to appear at dinner at the club gorgeously arrayed in the extreme fashion of evening costume, as if about to go to Lady Hauton's ball, and the absence of an invitation which compels them to wend their way homeward to their solitary lodgings in Norfolk Street, Strand. We can, too, but have a very few words to say on a description of club character, exceedingly common in these days, which every one will recognize—the club man whose strong points are diplomacy and international politics. We all know this gentleman by sight. We can see him any time we like to enter any of our smoking-rooms between the hours of 9 P.M. and 1 A.M.: his well-trimmed beard and sleek countenance, his little continental airs, his mysterious shakes of the head when Bismarck is mentioned, or when the theme of German nationality is broached. We know by heart the manner in which he will treat us to an exposition on the relations between Hungary and Austria, or the imposing tones in which he will let us into the secret of the coalition which the tribes of the Danube are fast forming; the tranquil and self-satisfied smile which will play upon his lips when he alludes to the sources of his information, and the well-bred contempt with which he shrugs his shoulders when any one ventures to propound a view that does not entirely dovetail with his own. Club bores and club wits, club scandal and club smoking-rooms, with all the representative types which throng them—these are topics to which we may with a quiet conscience now bid adieu.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CLUBS NOT IN LONDON.

Assimilation of Provincial to Metropolitan usages—Provincial Clubs generally—Those at Cheltenham, Bath, &c.—Col. Ramnugger—Dinner with Mr. Jeremiah Tomkins at the Athensæum, Liverpool—Country Gentlemen's Clubs—Tradesmen's Clubs—University Clubs at Oxford.

THE social influence which the metropolis has had within the last few years upon the provinces and upon England generally has been mainly of two kinds. Not merely has the absorbing power of this mighty London, year after year, increased in intensity and reach—not merely have its vortices and the circling eddies of its vast seething tide grown gradually wider and wider, sucking into the whirlpool of the fierce existence of the capital at every turn a fresh number of combatants in the struggle for life, till the belief has gradually gone abroad that “to this complexion must we all come,” and that save in London there is no field for a career of distinction or success. All this has it done; but it has also done much more. The metropolis has by swift degrees assumed, to an extent never before the case, the character of the microcosm and model of provincial life. It

has been one of the effects of the constant interchange of population between the country and the town, that the social usages and institutions of the former have at every step assimilated themselves more in their main features to the latter. At the commencement of the century the manners and customs which prevailed in London were essentially different from those which reigned elsewhere in England: and when the man whose adopted home was the capital revisited the country town of his birth, he seemed to have emigrated *pro tem.* into an altogether new sort of world. He found a changed standard of manners and morals, practices and theories; a changed order of daily doings, changed hours for in-coming and outgoing, for uprising, and for taking rest. To take a small but significant instance. Going back so far as we have indicated, late dinners which were the rule in London were the exception elsewhere. The country-town solicitor habitually had his joint served at his house within an hour after noon, and would as soon have thought of deferring the meal till he had entirely completed the labours of the day at six or seven o'clock, as he would have understood the usage which ordains for us a cup of chocolate at eight, and the more elaborate *déjeuner à la fourchette* at eleven. All this is altered now, and between the social customs of the better-to-do inhabitants of the market town of Mudborough and of the vast middle class of London there is little enough of appreciable difference. Nor has the alteration ended here. Insti-

tutions which twenty years ago were indigenous to the metropolis have been transplanted to provincial soil, and have thriven wonderfully in their new *habitat*. Theatres, restaurants, music halls, corn exchanges, and institutions of a variety of natures, whether for business or pleasure, these we now have in the full swing of their provincial development, in a host of places where they were formerly non-existent. But most conspicuous, perhaps, of all points wherein life out of London has assimilated itself to life in London, is to be accounted the establishment of provincial clubs. Here is an idea whose parentage was distinctly metropolitan, but whose adoption outside the limits of the world peopled by the natives of London has been an eminent success.

We have already seen that the ultimate purposes which the club may serve are of two kinds. It may be made amenable to objects of business or objects of pleasure. The man of many occupations and the man of none find the institution equally useful and agreeable. Hence it is not surprising that we should also see that the two species of towns in which the club provincial principally flourishes admit of a corresponding and analogous division as well, and that if we wish to examine the most important instances of the social growth in question, it is to those provincial towns which are essentially the seats of commerce or the haunts of fashion that we should mainly direct our attention. There is an excessive monotony about the composition of these institutions, so far as the

members are concerned, a dreary sameness as to the social life to be witnessed within their walls—a mournfully dead level of littleness in everything, which will render anything like a detailed investigation not merely uninteresting but unprofitable. Our survey will be synoptical, and our comments will be general. We will be satisfied with broad features, and will weary neither ourselves nor the reader with the ignoble task of minute description.

Brighton, Cheltenham, Bath, Leamington—this is the kind of places which will supply us with one class of provincial clubs. For the other we shall look principally to the great centres of manufacturing industry—to Cottonopolis and its kindred cities, to Liverpool and to Birmingham, and wherever else the atmosphere is always heavy and murky with the vast superincumbent masses of sooty smoke. Retired Indian officers, naval men, who are as completely shelved as may be considered to be the antique wooden walls which were the maritime glory of a past generation,—a sprinkling of traders who, having amassed a fortune, retire in ease,—a stray clergyman or two,—a fair allowance of country gentlemen and magistrates: these, in a general way, make up the constituent body of the fashionable watering-place club. Add to these ingredients a *quantum* of strangers who, with the extreme courtesy characteristic of the club provincial, enjoy the privilege of being made honorary members, and you will have a fair idea enough of the *tout ensemble* of

the institution. The Imperial at Cheltenham, the Union at Brighton, the Bath and County at the city of Beau Nash,—these are as favourable and as characteristic specimens of the class as we could have. The first of these owns one or two extremely fine billiard-tables, with players to match, is admirably organized, and differs from metropolitan institutions principally in the comparative emptiness of the rooms which strikes the London stranger, and an agreeably domestic air with which the apartments themselves are invested. Certain of its arrangements are, too, of a strangely primitive character, and are evidently framed with a retrospective view to the simplicity of that Saturnian age which knew little of late hours, and absolutely nothing of suppers after midnight: features excellent enough when looked at merely in a sanitary light, but acting rather as a wet blanket when social enjoyment is the end to be studied. This, however, is a feature which the Cheltenham Club shares in common with its other provincial affinities. You may breakfast, lunch, or, in an emergency, dine there in a very creditable manner, and for the human being who leads a healthy and a natural life this, we suppose, ought to be enough. Go in there in the forenoon, or into any other of the clubs which we have above specified—one description—*mutatis mutandis*—is applicable to all alike—and you will find quite enough of your fellow-creatures to ensure you against any sense of desolation. The great question with Col. Ramnugger, late of the Madras Staff Corps, and

with other gentlemen of that type who have been accustomed throughout their lifetimes to a career of perpetual motion and activity, and who have come, with their wife and children, to spend the residue of their days in some such convenient place as Brighton, Cheltenham, or Bath, is, what to do with themselves. They rise in the morning with a sense of *ennui*; they stalk about their own houses ill at ease, and knowing not whither to go, seeking occupation and finding none. A notable Godsend to these gentlemen the club.

"If it were not for the Imperial, where he can see his old friends," remarks Mrs. Ramnugger, "Heaven only knows what the poor Colonel would do."

So Col. Ramnugger wends his way to the aforesaid establishment a little before noon—buries himself in the papers for about an hour—is then seized upon by the spirit of unrest—glances up from the printed sheet—sees old Jawley, with whom he was quartered up in the hills some twenty-five years ago—walks up to him, and speaks.

"How are you, Jawley. I have just been reading an article in the paper on the Central Asia question; and, by George, what idiots and ignoramuses those fellows who write on these subjects are!"

"Quite so," says the Major: "they know absolutely nothing about it. They ought to ask us our opinion, or beg us to write for them, eh, Ramnugger?"

But the Colonel's instincts are far from being emphati-

ally literary, and he changes the subject to some other theme.

"Pretty woman that little Mrs. Plymley—wife of poor Plymley, you know, who died last year of cholera, at Nagpore—is," suggests Col. Ramnugger. "And, by Jove! Jawley, there she is driving her phaeton down the promenade. Good morning, Jawley; I shall go out and speak to her."

For the Colonel is quite sensible of the charms of a pretty face, a nice skin, and a well-turned ankle. "Sly old dog Ramnugger is," remarks Captain Jukes, who is home on leave, and who strolls presently into the club, to his friend, Lieutenant Flickett—home on leave also—"saw him flirting like one o'clock just now with Mrs. Plymley. Wonder what Mrs. Ramnugger says to it? Jealous old tigress that, I should think."

But Mrs. Ramnugger never loses an opportunity of expressing her private opinions to her confidential friend, Miss Clove, that all Indian officers are just the same, and go mad, one and all, at the sight of any doll with a pretty face and light hair. When Col. Ramnugger gets home to lunch, which he does with military precision at two, the partner of his bosom is quite certain to have heard that he was chatting half-an-hour since with the widow.


"Henry, you ought to be ashamed of yourself," says Mrs. R. "The whole place is talking of your disgraceful goings-on with Mrs. Plymley—wretched woman that she is. Her husband has not been dead two years yet."

"My dear," tranquilly replies the Colonel,—an Indian training certainly imparts a wonderful power of calm self-control to the feelings—"in this infernal place they talk about everything you do, say, or think. I'll be hung if your friend, Miss Clove, hasn't by this time told half the town what you have ordered for dinner, and how many eggs were placed on the table at breakfast."

And Col. Ramnugger is quite right. Places like Bath or Cheltenham, the former especially, are the veriest hotbeds of frivolous gossip and mischief-breeding chit-chat. Nevertheless, though the Colonel abuses the place, he stays in it notwithstanding, and though he daily threatens an Hegira to town, the threat never is, and never is likely to be, accomplished.

Look in at any of the clubs a little later in the day, and you will find Col. Ramnugger, Major Jawley, General Lyverlesse, and several other heroes of the same description, gathered together in little knots of three or four, engaged in beguiling the fleeting moment with the discussion of any topic that happens to come uppermost, ranging over the whole gamut of local scandal, debating the vexed question of Mrs. Flinder's age, of Mr. Flinder's income, wanting to know how their son's extravagance is to be checked, why Mr. Chasuble Stole should preach such long sermons, where old Goojerat, the Indian judge, gets his curry-powder from, and so forth. Or you may look into the billiard-room, where you will probably discover Captain Jukes

engaged in playing Lieutenant Flickett, amid much tobacco-smoke and not a little talk, or perhaps a whole company engaged in the ennobling pursuit of pool. As the hour for dinner draws on, the club begins to thin—for provincial club men are more domestic in their tastes than their metropolitan antitypes, and make it their practice to eat their mutton at their own private “mahogany trees.” And after dinner the appearance of the club is one of comparative desertion. Col. Ramnugger occasionally wends his way thither, in the face of the conjugal protest, to meet Major Jawley and General Lyverlesse,—but not often. In the billiard-room you will find a certain amount of animation. Men who have been busy all day stroll in thither, their domestic dinners done, to play a game or two, and matters go on with considerable briskness till close on midnight. But the sound of twelve is a sort of curfew; and when one o’clock comes there is a complete suppression of existence within the club walls. As for the card-room, it has in all probability been tolerably full at some period of the evening. There are sure to have been a few gentlemen, well stricken in years, amusing themselves with a rubber. The very air of the places in which the clubs now in question are situated seems necessarily to breed whist. Indeed, at most of these institutions there are two or three standing dishes in the card-room who are sure to make a very comfortable little annual income by their knowledge of the game.



In point of comfort, luxury, and splendour, it is impossible that any establishments should surpass the clubs to be met with in the manufacturing towns of northern England. The gentlemen who originate these have a very pretty appreciation of the value of the good things of this life: they like to take their ease, they are fond of a good dinner; they have no objection to a glass of sound wine, and it is entirely immaterial to them whether its price be five shillings, more or less.

“’Ang it, you know,” said old Tomkins to us not long since at the Athenæum Club in Liverpool, who hasn’t an aspirate for any one, but who has as many thousands per annum as he has years of age, “it don’t make much to me what I spend when I give a friend a dinner. ’Ang it all, you know, I began life without a ’alf-crown in the world, and now my name’s good for ’alf-a-million to-morrow. Lay into that ’ock, sir; ’eaps more in the club-cellar, and expense is no objection.”

Yes, we happened to be dining with Jeremiah Tomkins, Esq., at his club, and our friend—he had not, to use his own expression, partaken very sparingly of the generous fluids which he pressed so delicately upon us—was in his glory. He had shown us all over the establishment, had informed us how much the stair-carpet cost, what sum they had given for the building, how many servants were employed on the premises, what were the ages of each, and to what sum in the aggregate they amounted; to say nothing of a great deal other

intelligence equally important and interesting with which he favoured us. We almost envied our honest but h-less friend the pleasure which he took—gross of its kind though it was—when he swaggered up to the head-waiter's desk in the coffee-room, inspected the bill of fare, and finally wound up by saying—

“Now, 'Arris, I want to give this gentleman a real good dinner,—a tip-topper, you understand; a down-right rattler, and no mistake; and as you know, 'Arris, when I'm in the humour, I ain't the man to stick at 'alf-a-sovereign one way or the other. If I'm in a 'ospitable mood, 'ang the expense, I say. That's about the ticket, Mr. What's-your-name, ain't it?”

And Jeremiah Tomkins, Esq., who had said this in accents loud even to a stentorian pitch, turned proudly round, looked us full in the face, surveyed the whole apartment, and each individual member of the club, seated at his table, discussing his meal, with the air of one who was universal monarch, and who expected you to fall down and worship him, on the ground that he could buy you twice up to-morrow, if he felt disposed to do so. And at what hour does the reader imagine that the banquet occurred to which we were invited, and of one episode of which we have endeavoured to convey a faint idea? 'Twas late for Tomkins: positively four o'clock; for Tomkins sticks to the early habits he acquired as a pot-boy, and as a rule never dines later than two. However, as we have

said, the dinner was excellent, and Tomkins was not perhaps a wholly unfair specimen of the members of the establishment, and was undoubtedly indefatigable and efficient as a cicerone. He knew every one who entered the room, and had something to say *à propos* of each.

"That, sir," whispered Tomkins, in a very impressive but very audible whisper, pointing to a short stumpy man with red hair, projecting mouth, low forehead, or rather no forehead at all, "is Anthony Clupp—Anthony Clupp, one of the wealthiest men in Liverpool, and one of the largest merchants in the world." And Tomkins was evidently disappointed because the words which he uttered did not seem to produce upon us the profound impression of reverence and awe which he had anticipated.

As we have said, we were dining at an hour somewhat late in the day for Tomkins, and late in fact for a considerable number of members of the club; for it is the habit of many of these Liverpudlian merchant princes to take their dinner at their club not later than half-past one, and to go home at seven to a solid meat tea.

But gentlemen of the Tomkins and Clupp description are not the only, or indeed the staple of the members of the Athenæum Club at Liverpool. If you go into the smoking-room you will see the flashily over-dressed Tomkinsees and Clupp junior; or if you go into the billiard-room, you will find these young gentlemen with several more of the same kidney, deep at pyramids and pool, and both played for very considerable stakes. We

frankly confess we were not charmed by this special development of our English youth. Good hearts may have doubtless lurked beneath their gaudy and ostentatiously expensive waistcoats, but the outer man and the demeanour were repellent. We should imagine that the social education of a club of the kind which we have described must be of an infinitesimal kind; and herein lies one of the many differences between the club metropolitan and the club provincial. In the latter, every one seems to think that he is a kind of rover free to address any one he chooses and as he chooses, without the formality of anything approximating to an introduction,—a social feature which may possibly seem invested with the charms of sincerity and genuineness, but which is on the other hand decidedly apt to degenerate into offensiveness. Again, we have before now dwelt upon the tendency of London clubs to check in great measure all displays of individual eccentricity. If a young Englishman wishes to obtain the reputation of universal popularity, there is wisdom in the receipt, “Say as little as possible, and ride straight to hounds.” It is certain that taciturnity in a London club is a trait of character regarded with any thing but disfavour, and that your modern club wit is quite as objectionable in his way as your modern club bore. But in the case of provincial clubs, these remarks will not apply. There is a distinct movement in the contrary direction, and the man who can obtain the reputation of being a funny fellow in the smoking-room, or a “comic card” in

the billiard-room, has done much to achieve for himself promotion and esteem.

Other provincial clubs there are which scarcely come under either of the heads which we have given in this chapter. Those in the capitals of Scotland and Ireland, such as the University Club in Edinburgh, and the Kildare Street Club in Dublin, approach infinitely more closely to the London clubs in tone and style than any other provincial establishments. Then, again, we have clubs which are really, and not in name alone, country clubs—associations of country gentlemen, who when they come into the town nearest their seats find the necessity of a place where they can transact such business as they have in comfort, meet together, and talk without the publicity of a hotel coffee-room. The application of the club to these purposes is only of very recent date, but it is a practice which is greatly on the increase, and furnishes only an additional proof of the manner in which all English human nature gravitates towards this particular phase of existence. Or if we want further evidence of this fact we may discover it in the rapidity with which tradesmen's clubs have sprung up over England. At present these have advanced only in very few cases beyond the coffee-house stage,—they are clubs that are merely in embryo; but the idea is there; it simply needs time for its maturity and development, and in a short period we shall no doubt see the single room in an hotel—which now constitutes the sum of their establishment in which they meet together for

the purposes of pleasure or business, discussion or newspaper reading, to bolt a chop or to smoke a cigar—expand into a separate mansion, with suites of rooms upon the metropolitan model.


We are not willing to dismiss the subject of clubs not in London without at any rate a passing glance at University clubs—University clubs not in the sense of metropolitan associations with an academical qualification attached to the privilege of membership, but clubs actually existing within the cloistered shades of Oxford and Cambridge, and for our purpose here the premier University will supply us with instances enough. These are to a great extent novelties in the economy of undergraduate life. The whole course of College existence is in many ways nothing more than one linked chain of club life long drawn out. The absolute freemasonry which prevails amongst all the youngsters who belong to the same set, supplies the primary essentials of the idea. The long lounges of the undergraduate tribe in each other's rooms, the perfect ease with which Smith will drop into Robinson's after breakfast is over, to have a look over the papers, and to gossip over the programme of the coming day; the method of rotation in which associates habitually "Wine" together in the rooms of the various members of their set, till each has in his turn played host; the occasional dinner with which these gentleman, some or all of them, indulge themselves at the 'Mitre'—that is the real coffee-room of their club: all these institutions and usages are to

them as the customs, comforts, and luxuries of a regular club.

But though, as we have said, the whole routine of academical life possesses in itself a close affinity to the life of the club, regular and technical clubs have grown latterly to abound at least in the University of Oxford. Essentially class institutions all of these are. Their members are drawn principally or solely from the same class—a class bound together either by an identity of associations and antecedents in the past, or by an identity of interests, pursuits, and occupations in the present. Thus such clubs as the Eton and Harrow are among the most common. Pleasant resorts for old schoolfellows institutions of this order are, with no great multitude or variety of apartments, consisting generally of one room, with an ample window that commands an extensive *coup d'œil* of the High Street. You may see the members of any such clubs as these in great force round their casement any afternoon you like, watching the tide of existence, grave or gay, clerical or lay, graduate or undergraduate, as it flows past them along the pavement below. Perfectly tranquil, and supremely self-possessed are the air and demeanour of these young gentlemen, as they patronizingly survey the situation from their luxurious eminence. Pipes or cigars hang idly from their lips, and their most arduous mission appears to be fulfilled in scrutinizing the wayfarers as they pass and repass. If you look up at the windows of the Eton or Harrow Club any afternoon

during the summer term, you will see these contemplative philosophers in greater numbers than ever. The window ledge is surmounted with a cunningly devised cushion, on which their arms are gracefully placed, and as for the possessors of the arms in question themselves, they are clad in the extreme of the fashion which for the moment is the rage with most capricious Oxford. An easy, placid existence this of the young academical club men : a very pleasing, speculatively philosophical creed to hold. The study of human nature is superior to the study of books, and these young gentlemen doubtless think that they are better employed gazing out into the High Street, or passing their criticisms on its multitudinous occupants, than in grappling with the crabbed old Stagyrice, or curiously probing the unprofitable mysteries of composition in the dead languages. There is one feature in which the clubs of Oxford resemble the clubs of London—it is that of the bay window ; practically it may be said that the former are nothing but it, and that their members, one and all, come under the title of “the men at the club window.”

Again, to say nothing of other institutions of a closely similar description, such, for instance, as what we believe was almost the first of University clubs, Vincent's, started originally in the aquatic interest, but one whose pale has been gradually widened, and membership of which was accounted an honourable distinction,—a club this on a somewhat larger scale than those which we have



seen farther up in the High Street, with more rooms at the disposal of its members, and increased accommodation in a variety of ways, there are many other phases and variations of club life at the Universities. We have for instance a whole host of clubs peculiar to different colleges, wine clubs and breakfast clubs, the Phoenix at Brazenose—the resuscitation in some measure of the institution with the sulphurous title of the Hell Fire Club at the same college—the Adelphi at Exeter, and the Claret Club, that is or was in existence at Trinity. In reality these societies amount to nothing else than select bands of *aristoi*. Once let Robinson or Jones do something pre-eminently creditable to his college, whether it be in the cricket field, the school, or the river, or with the drag, and the chances are that if only he be in a moderate degree a socially agreeable sort of fellow, he will be promoted at once to this legion of honour. Very select, indeed, in their composition these clubs are; the greater therefore and the more greedily sought after the honour of belonging to them. It has been the proudest day in many a lad's life when he was unanimously elected a member of some such exclusive band as those which we have mentioned, and wore for the first time round his hat the ribbon which was its distinguishing badge; for in the wearing of exceptional ribbons, and also in some cases of the whole body of members walking into the college-hall full-dress for dinner once a week or fortnight, exciting thereby the admiration

and astonishment of the *ignobile vulgus* of their fellow undergraduates, do the principal outward and visible signs that distinguish the association consist.

But the clubs which of one kind or another exist in the University world are almost numberless. There are essay clubs and debating clubs; there is the Canning Club, the great stronghold of Oxford Conservatism, the influence of whose organization in the last University election was very clearly felt, which meets or did meet every Thursday night for the purpose of discussing matters in general, with the assistance of such gentle stimulants as cigars, seltzer-water and sherry, and other pleasant fluids, and which holds a grand dinner once every term, occasionally getting for its president a really great political gun; there are freethinking clubs; singing clubs, and praying clubs; high-church clubs, low-church clubs, and no-church clubs; and finally there are clubs of graduates just as well as undergraduates. Among the latter the institution known as the Dominicans must be held to take a first place—a society wholly composed of the younger fellows of colleges in the present day—a class entertaining a sufficiently high opinion of its importance—who hold their *réunions* on Sunday nights, selecting each other's rooms in rotation for the purpose of the assemblage. A good deal of thin talk is heard on these occasions; an inordinate amount of conceit, doxosophism, and priggishness displayed, plenty of superficial omniscience is noticeable, a little tobacco smoke is consumed,

and an innocent quantity of the lightest beverages is drunk. Of all Oxford developments the rising don of the new generation is the least agreeable.

But why pursue this subject farther? Have we not said that the club instinct is a first principle in English human nature? and have we not advanced enough testimony to make good our assertion? It is born with the Englishman, it grows with his growth and strengthens with his strength. He commences his club life even at the period of his school days. "While yet a child and yet unknown to the fame" of any of the metropolitan institutions which we have passed in review before us, he has his cricket-ball and his foot-ball club—nay, often his reading and debating clubs. At Eton and one or two other public schools he has much more, and revels in a luxuriously fitted room with all appliances for reading or writing that the most fastidious could require. What youth commences, manhood completes, "As the twig is bent the tree's inclined." Nature implants the capacity, art trains and develops it, and thus it is that we are a nation saturated to our hearts' core with the idea of the club.

CHAPTER XIX.

CLUB MANAGEMENT.

Different Principles on which Clubs may be founded — Functions of Committees—Election Committees—Wine Committees: their errors and disadvantages — Club officials and Club servants—The Secretary—The Steward, Housekeeper, Clerk of the Kitchen, Cook, &c.—Question of Club prices and Club economy — Blackballing.

HITHERTO we have solely and entirely busied ourselves with the social aspect of club life. We have dined excellently at the Reform. We have supped reasonably well at the Raleigh. We have talked politics at the Carlton. We have intrigued just a little at White's. We have played our guinea whist at the Arlington. We have perfumed the smoking room with the odour of Hudson's best regalias. We have skimmed over periodicals in the morning room, and have dipped into treatises of a more elaborate character in the library. We have, in fact, superficially though it may be, seen as many phases of club life as in the time which we have devoted to the task could well be expected. We have entered clubs of every gradation of respectability, established for widely various purposes, and of many separate degrees of standing; but it must be confessed that we have partaken of club

enjoyment, and have revelled in club society without any examination of those deeper ulterior questions which might naturally suggest themselves. When we have ordered our dinner we have bestowed no space or time to a consideration of the complicated stages through which the preparation of our repast must go; have for the moment left altogether out of sight the problem, in obedience to what hidden laws it is that our soup always reaches us flavoured as it should be, and that our entrées are always served up with a perfection of condition suitable to the palate of the daintiest gourmand. In a word, we have assumed consistently throughout the attitude of the scriptural centurion, and have acted upon the principle that we have but to ring the bell and issue our mandates to the red-plushed menial, or inspect the dinner card and communicate our wishes to the skilful head-waiter, and that the inevitable result in the natural order of things, without any further amount of definite human interposition will be, in the fitting fulness of time, the punctual consummation of our desire. We have been quite satisfied so long as our wants were in some manner or other supplied, without inquiring as to the particular way in which the process was completed, the many intermediate steps, which succeed the order and precede its fulfilment, and the large amount of individual industry and energy called into operation at every stage. It remains for us in the present chapter to go a little deeper, to regard the business routine and organization of clubs in general—

their hidden management and their mysterious sources of control—to view, in fact, “with eye serene, the very pulse of the machine.” How few out of those who diligently peruse those printed broadsheets which issue daily from the newspaper offices, containing nothing less than a compendious contemporaneous history of at least twenty-four hours of the world, know of the method in which they are laid upon the breakfast table of the public, by the side of the matutinal tea and toast. How few, comparatively speaking, of those who are dependent for the whole solace of their creature existence upon clubs, know of the laws which regulate the production and supply of those same creature-comforts.

Nor is this all. Before we enter at any detail upon the consideration of the question which we have just started, it may be well that we should say a few preliminary words as to those broad principles which govern the earliest foundation and enter into the first genesis of all clubs. Every club, it may be said, must rank under one of three heads. Either its existence must be the result of purely private speculation, and that generally of one individual; or it must be established on the proprietary system; or lastly, the most legitimate and usual development of all, it must be an association of private gentlemen, each of whom has an equal interest in its well-being, though no prospect of or desire for pecuniary aggrandizement from its success.

With reference to the first of these systems, it may be

said that it has practically become a thing of the past. Crockford's was an instance of it, but Crockford's is extinct ; so were White's, Boodle's, Brooks's, and Arthur's, but these, from being originally the property of one eponymous possessor, have gradually come into the ownership of the aggregate of their members. The few cases in which the principle is still in operation are not, as we have seen, of a specially honourable or desirable kind, comprehending, for the most part, those hurriedly got-up military societies in which gentlemen of the Captain Flimsy Sloper or Major Flamley type constitute the preponderating element. As for the club proprietary, it is difficult in many cases clearly to distinguish it from the immediately preceding order. Its main feature is comprised in the fact that in the great majority of instances it is the sole and exclusive property of a wine-merchant, who places in it a steward, allowing this official sometimes a percentage on the profits of the establishment, sometimes a salary irrespective of any such proceeds. As may be supposed, it is to the liquids which are vended that the proprietor mainly looks for his profits. In the case of a club of this description, the members and the committee are almost nonentities as regards the actual task of management. Complaints may be nominally referred to the latter body, but its members will, in their turn, be compelled to consult the proprietor before any alteration can be made. In the matter of the election of members of the club, the committee is vested with the same powers

of electing and rejecting as in the case of differently organized societies. Nor is this the only instance of the proprietary club to be met with. The idea of the scheme may be accomplished in two other ways. The proprietorship may be transferred from one individual tradesman to the members themselves, who, buying up the shares, participate in the profits, in which case the committee of management is naturally chosen from the body of proprietors. Or a radically identical system of proprietorship, so far as the idea of the thing goes, may be in force, but in force subject to certain limitations of numbers and of time. A club established upon the ordinary principles and in the ordinary way, may, through mismanagement, a falling off of members, or some other such cause, get into difficulties. What is to be done to prop up the rapidly-falling structure, and to assist it in living till the crisis is over, and it is able to exist by itself? Under these circumstances the plan of issuing loan notes is resorted to, the amount of the loan being subscribed on this security by a certain number of members, who are to be recouped for the money which they have advanced by the deduction of a capitation fee upon all the new members admitted from that date. It is plain that the subsidizing members have in this manner a direct and immediate instance in beating up fresh recruits for the club, since they are for the time being just as much *ipso facto* proprietors as in the case which we have already specified. As for what we have called the ordinary system upon which clubs are established, it is so general,

simple, and intelligible that it needs very few words in the way of explanation or comment. A certain number of gentlemen, drawn together by similarity of interests, tastes, and pursuits, agree to form a society, subject to certain rules hereafter to be agreed upon. They purchase no shares, contract no liability of any kind. They merely contribute an entrance-fee and an annual subscription, and these go towards the rent or the purchase of the house in which the club is held, or to the discharge of the other minor expenses of the society. They engage the services of a secretary and of a staff of servants, all of whom differ in no respect from the servants and *employés* in the private house of an English gentleman. As for any balance there may be when all the expenses are paid, it is placed to the credit of the club body in general, and does not find its way, as in the proprietary system, into the pockets of particular members.

A properly organized club is as elaborate a business as it is possible to imagine—a system of *imperia in imperiis*, full of complications, and calling at every turn for extreme delicacy and tact. The committee, it may be said, represents the interests of the body of the members at large; but should the duty of representation be unsatisfactorily fulfilled the committee is responsible, and the short-coming is visited with a vote of impeachment, of want of confidence, or with some other analogous penalty. Nor in other ways are the functions of the body light ones. Club men are fastidious in their way, and impose no severe

limit upon themselves in the indulgence to the full of the Englishman's prescriptive right of vociferous and vigorous complaint. If gentlemen of the Helluo Bolter type are always writing querulous letters to the committee, indignantly observing that their dinners are never properly cooked, or that wine is seldom properly iced, there are other members who have never done grumbling at the arrangement of gas-lights in the hall, the number of evening papers taken in, or the principles upon which the novel-list from Mudie's is drawn up. Then, in a club of any size there are sure to be cantankerous members who take exception to the conduct of this servant, or to the way of speaking of that; who are never satisfied with the cigars which the club provides, and have always a grievance against the club postal arrangements. Mr. *Æstheticus Æthix* is disgusted with the hideous pattern of the new stair-carpet; Mr. Grump declares that sit where he will he can never escape from draught; Mr. Stiffneck asserts that the attack of fever from which he has just recovered was, originally, solely and wholly due to the utter absence of any ventilation in the card-room. In fact, there is no end to the grounds of grievance which the members of clubs are certain in some way to discover for themselves; and of all men with a grievance, the club man with a grievance is by far the greatest nuisance.

Into these and such as these complaints it is the duty of the committee of management to inquire. But there are other committees besides this one. There is a library

committee, and a wine committee; possibly there is also an election committee. This latter, however, is by no means an immutable and uniform institution in club administration. In many clubs the committee of general management constitutes also the committee of election, while in some others the ballot for entrance devolves not upon a chosen few but upon the whole aggregate of members. As for the difficulty of achieving the membership of a really good club, it is sufficiently well known to preclude the necessity of any remark here. To get into the Athenæum, the Carlton, or the Rag, is almost the question of a lifetime, unless, indeed, you happen to make good your title-deeds to fame by some unexpected *coup*. In that event you may be chosen a member *per saltum*, at once. Almost every club vests in the hands of its committee the power of electing a certain chosen few annually on the ground of indisputable distinction in any one field of renown. *A propos* of the wine committee, there are one or two remarks and suggestions which it may not be out of place to make. Of all the functions which are discharged by the different managing bodies of clubs, this is, as a general rule, fulfilled in the least efficient and most unsatisfactory way. We do not mean to say that there are not very excellent wines to be met with at clubs, but they are not so excellent as they might be were certain changes in the method of selection to be put in force. First, let us look at the period at which the delicate duty of selection is performed. When is it? If you want

to know the real flavour of any vintage, if you are desirous of testing the delicacy of a bouquet, or excellence of body, when and how do you commence operations? Why, you sip the precious fluid with no other accompaniment in the way of solid food save a wafer biscuit; you do not raise the glass containing it to your lips between the intervals of a heavy and elaborate dinner. The club wine tasters, however, reverse all this. They order a substantial banquet, and then, in the course of its consumption, they pronounce their opinion on the merits of the many various kinds of wine which are placed before them for the purpose of selection. Is it probable, is it possible that the results of this process should be satisfactory? Is it wonderful that other members who order the approved-of wine at a period of the day when the discriminating capacities of the palate are more actively in force, and more keenly perceptive, should pronounce signally as wanting in delicacy of flavour a beverage which had been pronounced by these Aristarchi of the grape to be excellent and wanting in nothing? Secondly, private influence is brought far too much and too often to bear upon the task of selection. One member of the judicial committee has a friend who is a wine-merchant, and whose wines he is anxious to introduce into the club: occasionally it is quite possible that the said member may have previously entered into an agreement with his friend, the merchant, of a kind distinctly advantageous to himself should he only prove effectual to guide the judgment of

his colleagues in the desired direction. Urged by this additional incentive, stimulated by instigations of friendship and by considerations of lucre, the gentleman in question brings to bear all the interest with his colleagues which he can exert, and the result very often is that, in this way, a really good wine is rejected and a bad one chosen.

Passing from the duties of the various committees in general, we are led on to the enumeration of the paid officials and head-servants of the club, in connection with the extent and nature of the departments that they each respectively fill. At the head of these naturally stands the secretary. This functionary enjoys the closest confidence of the committee ; attends the different meetings, reports on the general condition of things, mentions any complaints which have reached his ear, throws out any suggestions which members may have dropped to him, and in other ways lightens and utilizes the labours of the committee. His duties do not end here. It is upon him that the business correspondence of the club, and in some measure the accounts, devolve. He has, moreover, to keep an eye over the active management of the establishment, and if dissatisfaction or complaint arise among the servants, it is to him that the point of issue is referred. Should the housekeeper trespass upon the domain of the cook, or the steward upon that of the housekeeper, it is the secretary's business to act as arbitrator, and mediate also between the contending parties. The post being responsible, and imperatively requiring on the part of its

occupant no small amount of judgment, tact, and trustworthiness, is naturally well paid ; and the salary of the club secretary varies from 250*l.* to 500*l.* A clerk is or is not provided, according to the duties of the office. The club secretary is almost invariably a gentleman by birth and position, and often a retired officer in the army : he must at any rate be a gentleman in demeanour. Practically speaking, it is the secretary who is the main spring of the club. Without a good one no club can possibly prosper ; and to be a good one, he must satisfy a variety of conditions, must be skilful as a correspondent and accountant, must be thoroughly methodical in his habits, must have temper and tact to manage the servants, and to attend to the thousand and one little grievances constantly brought to him from all sides. How far he is absolutely accounted a member of the club, and enjoys the privileges which such membership confers, varies in different cases.

The three chief under-officials of the club are the steward, the housekeeper, and the cook—each of them supreme in their own departments. The average wages or salary of the steward is from 150*l.* to 200*l.* ; of the housekeeper, from 80*l.* to 100*l.* ; while the remuneration of the cook is proportioned to the prestige and accomplishments of the artiste. What the butler is in the private house, that the steward is in the club. The post is one of no small confidence. It is the steward who not merely superintends in a general way the management and

economy of high-life below stairs, but who gives orders to tradesmen, and superintends all the cellar arrangements. Just as the housekeeper has everything to do with the selection of the maid-servants on the establishment, so the cook has the choice of all those menials whom he may have occasion in the execution of his duties to employ ; and if on any extraordinary occasions he requires a colleague, he has of course the privilege of selecting him. But the account of the system of club management is not yet complete. In addition to steward, housekeeper, and cook, there is a functionary known as the clerk of the kitchen, instituted mainly for the purpose of keeping a check upon the cook, of seeing that punctuality is observed, and of ensuring promptitude of execution. The written order in the shape of the dinner-bill, which the club man who strolls into the coffee room gives for dinner, passes through the hands of the waiter who may be in attendance, to the clerk of the kitchen, who copies it into a book kept for the purpose, with an additional entry of the precise time at which it reached him. Should any delay in the execution of this order occur, an application is made to the clerk, who at once investigates the matter, and returns the necessary reply. As for the volume already mentioned, in which the various dinner-bills are transcribed, it is religiously preserved in the archives of the mansion, and if the gentleman who has dined at his club to-day is desirous of recalling the dinner to his memory, say five years hence, all he has to do is

to refer to the collection of bills of fare in question. With reference to the cook, it should be stated that in addition to the regular salary attached to his post, he enjoys considerable opportunities of increasing his income by the acquisition of what are termed in technical parlance "improvers,"—fees paid him by less expert *chefs*, whether male or female, who repair to his cuisine, of their own accord or in consequence of their master's command, for the purpose of improving their style and perfecting their execution. These tyros are, of course, punctually prohibited from touching anything, and are limited to the privilege of watching the operations which the master conducts.

The number of servants employed on the club premises is fixed naturally by the proportions of the club itself: perhaps for a society of ordinary dimensions, from forty to sixty would be a fair average—all of whom, with the exceptions that we have already stated, from the head-waiter and hall-porter downwards, come within the control of the steward.

Such is a fair account of the general system of management in force in the economy of club life, and the idea of the thing admits of but little improvement. The complaint has recently been made that club expenses are excessive, and that the price charged for the various articles of consumption is wrongly and unnecessarily high. We believe that it is impossible to bring such a charge as this against clubs *en masse*. Doubtless there are esta-

blishments—notably one in St. James's Street, and another of very recent formation in Piccadilly—where the tariff of prices might be reduced with considerable justice. But seeing that an excellent plain dinner, exclusive of wine, may be obtained at most clubs for two shillings, or two shillings and sixpence, it is not easy to see how the accusation of extortion can be at all universally preferred. It is possible that certain superfluities of expense where they exist, might be materially reduced by a re-arrangement of the purchase system on the part of the steward. Seeing that this official is at liberty to select such tradesmen as he chooses, it is only natural that he should be paid a very considerable amount of court on the part of these vendors of various goods. Nay, he is paid something more, in the shape of a variety of *honoraria*, for the purpose of securing a continuance of his goodwill and a perpetuity of his custom. This is a practice which may conceivably have the effect of inducing the steward to adhere to the more expensive tradesmen, simply for the reason that dealings with them redound in a larger degree to his profit than with those carried on with the chargers of more economical prices. The whole question is one into which club committees should make it their business to inquire a good deal more severely than is their custom.

We have said something above as to the work of the various committees, and the different methods adopted for the election of members. We will conclude with one or two remarks on the subject of blackballing. Practically

it is seldom enough that a man—to use the technical expression—is “pilled.” If he is considered to be ineligible as a member, as much is intimated to his proposer, who, acting upon the hint, withdraws his name, and, save in some cases where it is desired to gratify a personal and ignoble spite, in a personal and ignoble way, this opportunity of averting a consummated unpleasantness is always afforded. As for the grounds which exclude from clubs, they are numerous. A man whose fair fame is tarnished, or upon whose reputation there rests the slur of boredom, will find a difficulty in achieving the *entrée* of a good club. Against these are certain broader and professional non-qualifications for the membership of particular clubs. Thus one society makes it a Median and a Persian law not to admit solicitors; for instance, there are none of these at the Union, and we believe only two at the Carlton. Another is equally exclusive in the matter of doctors; while it happened only very recently at a certain club in St. James’s Street that a gentleman was actually blackballed, notwithstanding that he had the recommendation of belonging to a well-known city club, simply because a rumour had reached the committee that his wife failed occasionally to pronounce her H’s correctly. The force of fastidiousness can no farther go.

END OF VOL. I.

